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Dumnonia

and

The Valley of the Parret

A Historical Retrospect

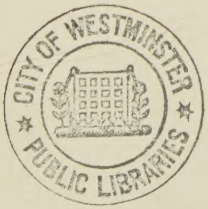
BY

THE REV. WILLIAM H. P. GRESWELL

M.A., F.R.G.S.

Author of "The Land of Quantock," etc.

With Maps and Illustrations



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Preface.

SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND, the President of the Royal Geographical Society, remarked in his address at the Anniversary Meeting, 29th May, 1922, that the time had arrived for the emergence of a new type of explorer—*viz.* the Homeland Explorer, who will explore, observe and describe his own homeland. In this direction he noted that Thomas Hardy and Maurice Hewlett had made Wessex and Sussex known to us. Encouraged by these examples I have endeavoured, *magno intervallo* no doubt, to throw some light upon what may be termed "Ancient Dumnonia." This is a point in which all "Devonians" and, indeed, dwellers in the three western counties of Somerset, Devon and Cornwall may be especially interested. "Dumnonia," like "Demetia" and "Demetica regio," is a very ancient geographical term and the Dumnonii certainly go back to Roman times and were noted for their sea-faring qualities. In King Alfred's time "Dumnonia" was used by the King's Biographer, Bishop Asser, and would certainly mean a good deal more than we now mean by the County of Devon which meets Somerset at Countisbury Gate and Exmoor. But until we are sure of the exact meaning of, say, "Dumnonia" and "Demetica regio" how can we follow King Alfred's great Danish campaign of 878? Historical problems wait for their real solution upon the proper explanation of geographical terms. Many disputes have turned and still turn upon the exact site of Cynuit and Ethandune, two very momentous fights in our island history. There is an Edington

in Wiltshire and an Edington on the Polden ridge above the river Parret in Somerset. To which of them shall or ought the student of a military "terrain," that had its especial features of marsh, estuary and trackless forests a thousand years ago, now go for enlightenment? Some exact scholars have fixed this military question by relying on philology and philology alone, saying that Ethandune in Wilts fulfils their requirements. This is not enough.

In my study of "Ancient Dumnonia" I have laid some stress upon this great "Crux" of our Early Island history and, although the ultimate elucidation of Alfred's Danish campaign, ending with the "Peace of Wedmore," is by no means the only matter of historical interest, it is an extremely important one. German strategists, noted for their thorough methods, would probably have solved all the problems of Alfred's campaign long ago, but we do not want Germans in this country to spy out and explore. However, I have been fortunate enough to have the matured opinion of Major P. T. Godsal of Iscoed Park, Whitchurch, who has made a military study of the Conquest of Britain by the Angles and also the Thames Valley Campaign. There is one point upon which Major Godsal, as well as other military critics, may not have laid sufficient stress and it is the very great and material assistance given to King Alfred not only by the men of Somerton, who rallied so nobly around him, but by Odda and the men of Dumnonia who were victorious at Cynuit Castle. These warriors must be classed amongst the "Welsh-kin" of King Alfred's Will, and so mentioned, meaning not necessarily the Welsh of Wales but the British or "Dumnonii" of the West Country who have persistently survived all changes. Being sea-faring men by tradition they must not be confused with the tribal Welshmen of the Welsh mountains. The Welsh chiefs acknowledged the "suzerainty," if we may so call it, of King Alfred but in his extremity at Athelney we do not know that they gave material help. The Dumnonii on

the spot, *i.e.* in North Somerset and possibly Devonia itself, gave this.

Under date of August 23rd, 1922, Major Godsal writes as follows :

" You have asked my views on the Battle of Ethandun. Though I cannot claim to be a military expert, and have made but a slight study of King Alfred's campaign against the Danes which resulted in the surrender of Guthrum and his men, I will try and state its leading features from the military standpoint.

" To begin with we seem to know with certainty the bases from which the contending forces operated. The Danes had established themselves at Chippenham, Alfred had sought refuge in the marshes of the river Parret, and was for a time in hiding. The Danes had a fleet in the Severn under Hubba and Inguar. These landed at some place on the coast of Devon which then extended as far as the river Parret.

" They there fought a battle with the men of Devon under their Ealdorman Odda and drove them into a small fortress.

" The men of Devon, however, made a successful sally by night and killed Inguar and Hubba and twelve hundred Danes, the rest of the Danes escaping to their ships.

" It is evident that the Danes had a large force and were not engaged in a mere raid, but were endeavouring to hunt up Alfred. The name of the fortress occupied by Odda is given as ' Arx Cynuit,' and this has been identified with Combwich on the left bank of the mouth of the Parret. However that may be, it is inconceivable that this battle took place anywhere but on the banks of the Parret.

" The result is all that concerns us now. It was that it gave Alfred and his men fresh confidence, and Alfred who had hitherto been in hiding began to make a small fort called Athelney in the centre of the marshes of the Parret ; and this became without question Alfred's base of operations.

"The construction of Athelney must have been evident to the Danes and was a challenge to them that they could not ignore, following as it did the deaths of Inguar and Hubba and twelve hundred Danes on the coast of Devon, and the capture of the Raven standard of the sons of Lodbrog. I will now state what we should naturally suppose Guthrum would do under these circumstances, and later on prove by the clearest evidence that that is exactly what he did do.

"Guthrum would at once march his army down to the Poldens, with the mouth of the Parret as his temporary base of supply, since his fleet could bring stores from Gloucester and Bristol, or acquire them by raiding the coast of Wales.

"Guthrum we may be sure was under no illusions, and he knew the difference between a mere raid where men, if they could collect enough horses, might ride from one place to another living on the country, and a definite military operation demanding constant supplies in a war-wasted country. Guthrum knew that if he did not pin Alfred to his marshes that he would before the summer raise the country against him.

"But it will be asked what evidence is there that Guthrum took up a position on the Poldens? The simple fact that Alfred fought with the Danes daily from Athelney is ample evidence that the Danes could have been no further off than the Poldens. But it may be asked what was Alfred doing in risking the lives of his men in numberless little fights that could apparently have no effect on the result.

"Alfred may have done this partly to give encouragement to his men and to keep them in heart, and to enable them to prove themselves as good men as the Danes, when fighting on equal terms. Thus by skilfully devised raids on exposed outposts, or by attacks on vessels in the Parret, the Danes were taught that they were engaged with an enemy who could not be despised, and that above all things it would not do for them to leave their base at the mouth of the Parret unguarded.

"And this gives us our cue as to Alfred's main object in this

constant warfare. It was evidently his object to pin the Danes to the Poldens until he could collect his forces to attack them there.

"Whilst Alfred was so weak that he had to take refuge in such a miserable spot as the marshes of the Parret, it is evident that he must have been quite unable to conduct any kind of military operations very far from those marshes, and that he was merely biding his time, until by a sudden concentration of the local fyrds at a given date, he was able to have an army large enough to attack the Danes. That these same local forces may, either by Alfred's directions, or of their own initiative, have made it impossible for the Danes to use the inland route from Chippenham to the Poldens is quite likely, thus forcing the Danes to depend upon their ships and the coast route for supplies.

"It has been suggested that Guthrum might have occupied High Ham and Dundon Hill to the east of Athelney from whence Athelney could be more easily approached.

"It is inconceivable that a skilled leader would have made such a false move, leaving his base camp unprotected and marching to a flank in the face of an active and enterprising enemy; and advancing into a difficult and intricate country; and then taking up a position with his rear towards the wooded country from which a strong relieving force might at any time be expected. Moreover the Danish Army would have had to take all its supplies with it, and have entirely lost the support of its fleet.

"When Danish marauders could collect enough horses they were able, owing to the open character of the English settlements, to use them as a means of transport for their marauding expeditions, living on the country. We do not know that Guthrum had any number of horses, but even if he had they would have been of little use to him in the marshy lands of Somerset, and we do know that the Danes had not learned to use horses in any other way than as a means of transport.

Perhaps the best way to realise what a false move Guthrum would have made if he had taken his army to High Ham, is to put ourselves in Alfred's position.

"With the preparations that he must have already begun for concentration of the local forces of Somerset, Dorset, Wilts, and Hampshire at a spot in rear of High Ham, can we suppose that Alfred would have been otherwise than pleased that the enemy should have committed his army to a false position that rendered Alfred's task so much easier. As it turned out Alfred had to go and seek his enemy on the sound ground of the Poldens, and complete success depended largely upon surprise and this, by surprise, he achieved.

"Alfred, it appears, found the Danish army drawn up but apparently with the object of an attack across the marshes on Athelney at low tide. The Danes appear to have been overwhelmed with the first rush and to have had to seek safety by a hasty flight. Under these circumstances it would have been impossible for the Danes to get on board their ships, and the only thing they could do was to take refuge in a small earthwork, and as some or all of the boats must have been lying in the mud, they must have fallen into the hands of the English, who probably were thus enabled to capture some of the ships, but we hear nothing of this, and possibly the ships were away fetching supplies.

"This version of the battle of Ethundun enables us to understand how Alfred was able to sit down in front of a fortress for a fortnight and prevent a highly trained force like that of the Danes escaping from it.

"The well supplied camp of the Danes provided all that was necessary for Alfred's large army, and as the Danes could only get away on one side it was quite easy to make escape impossible, without Alfred having to divide his untrained forces.

"Let us now turn to the Edington near Westbury, in Wiltshire, which since Camden's time has found favour with the Academical world. Let us dismiss all the difficulties of Alfred's

supposed march to Edington, in Wiltshire, and the many problems it raises, and suppose that whilst Alfred was making an apparently unnecessary fort in the marshes of the Parret the Danes for some six or seven weeks were remaining in camp near Edington and suffering themselves to being daily attacked by forces directed by Alfred who presumably was living forty miles away.

"By this means however it is supposed that Alfred had discovered the exact whereabouts of the Danes and had decided to disturb their repose. The difficulties of approaching such a camp, undiscovered by the enemy, must of course have been far greater than those involved in the approach to Edington on the Poldens, and there Guthrum in preparing to attack Athelney, and thinking that he had got Alfred in front of him, may well have called in his pickets and vedettes and have neglected to keep a look-out on his left flank.

"The first thing we note about the supposed battle at Edington, in Wiltshire, is that, if it had taken place as suggested, it would infallibly have been called the battle of Bratton. However, let that pass, it is an unimportant detail. What strikes us at once as most extraordinary is that the Danes, in an open country well known to them, should deliberately select an open earthwork to flee to, on the top of an exposed hill, and where they knew there was no food.

"Supposing however, for the sake of the argument, that the Danes did do this, we are faced with a more extraordinary military problem still. How could Alfred with his untrained army have held this far better trained force of the Danes in an open earthwork, from whence they could steal away any night in any direction they chose, and be ten miles away before Alfred could pursue them when daylight came.

"Alfred would have had to divide his army into at least three parts, he would have had to fetch provisions for these detachments from the Danish camp, and he would have had to keep a cordon of sentries by night, and to some extent by day.

This would all have put an almost unsupportable strain even on a highly trained army, and I doubt if any soldier can be found to admit that such a military operation was possible for an army recently collected from their farms and homesteads.

"Surely we should have heard something of such a wonderful military feat if it had occurred. In the Anglo-Saxon chronicle, so remarkable for its reticence, we are given that one touch of nature which explains Alfred's extraordinary power over his followers. When he met them at their place of assembly we are told that "they were fain of him." Love for a leader may hold an untrained army together as long as he is with it, but it cannot make up for the lack of discipline and military training in his absence. Alfred could easily hold his men together on the Poldens, and his presence ensured that they were always on the alert.

"It would have been far otherwise on the bleak hillsides that surround the Bratton earthwork, and it may be asserted with confidence that the idea that Alfred's untrained forces could have held up the starving Danes there is the grossest of military fallacies.

"One unquestionable fact emerges from this discussion, and it is that wherever it was that Guthrum and his Danes were starved into surrender, it could not have been at Bratton Castle." So far Major Godsal writes.

I may add that the identification of the place-name Cynuit (Asser) or Cynwith (Simeon) with the modern Comwich, ascertained by myself by actual comparison with some old versions of the name, *e.g.* Cunyz and Comwiz in the Placita of Henry III, Edward I and Edward II, undoubtedly referable to the modern Comwich on the Lower Parret, makes a very strong point in favour of a concentration at Parret mouth, both of Danes and Saxons in 878. Such a place as "Kinwith" near Bideford, which has been identified with Asser's Cynuit, is obviously

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out of the way and has no relation to the Alfred campaign, lying as it does fifty miles to the west of Athelney, with no plundering attractions for the Dane comparable with those in the Valley of the Parret. Some, indeed, have favoured Countisbury, on the north coast of Somerset, and at a point between the present counties of Devon and Somerset, as a possible landing-place, but a very brief survey of this precipitous coast and its scant landing-places must end in its rejection. The Bideford site owes its popularity, chiefly, to Kingsley's "Westward Ho."

Bishop Clifford thought that Cynuit was really Comwich, and his able researches into the Alfred campaign are set forth in the *Proceedings* of the Somerset Archæological Society (vols. xxi and xxiii for 1875 and 1877), but not having the opportunities we now have of comparing versions of the original place-name, such as we now see it to be in Wells MSS. and old Placita, he could not be sure of his identification. The publications of the Historical MSS. Commission have made the task easier. But the Bishop spoke as a local antiquary of great learning and experience, the possession of the manor of Cannington, and with it its chief "membrum" Comwich, having been in Lord Clifford's family since Stuart days. He hardly merited the strongly worded condemnation of Mr. W. H. Stevenson, an Oxford authority on the circumstances attending the Battle of Aethandune (or Edington), when he said that the Bishop's "attempt to prove that Cynuit was Cannington Park was one of the wildest freaks of his astounding paper" in the *Proceedings* of the Somerset Archæological Society. I have alluded to this judgment in a brochure written on the "Battle of Edington" in 1910. But it may be noted again here that Bishop Clifford did not say that Cynuit or Comwich was Cannington Park. His point was that Cynuit and Comwich meant the same place, allowing for variation of spelling, and a comparison of old MSS. now available shows that he was right in his surmise.

Further, Cannington Park, lying at a slight elevation above and close to Comwich and Comwich Passage across the Lower Parret, was always a fort and strong place commanding both, described exactly down to the details of its loose stone walling, surrounding it then and now, by Bishop Asser who had seen it. The absence of water on this block of carboniferous limestone, with its very thin covering of turf, is also noted by the bishop, and this peculiarity is obvious to-day. Moreover, the "Castle" as a place-name for part of it survives on the Cannington Tithe Map, and the identification can be made by all who wish to take the trouble. If we go to Bideford and view the place called "Bloody Corner," identified by Mr. Vidal in *Archæologia* (vol. xv, p. 198), as Kinwith Castle, and close by "Hubbastone," an invented name to suit the legend, and criticised by E. A. Freeman, what comparison can there be? Bideford and North Devon must be voted out of the campaign of 878.

Further, although Bishop Clifford rightly, as I think, identified Comwich with Cynuit, he did not proceed to show how important a place it really was in former days and even up to modern times. As I shall prove, here lay a terminal port, and here the principal line of communication east and west of the Parret. In the 15th century Comwich was the "head" of navigation for larger vessels than the mere coast "trows" and traders, and the anchorage then, with "Merchant's Reach" above it on the way to Bridgwater, was always important. Within living memory vessels from Quebec, laden with timber, have brought their cargo to Comwich, there to be unshipped and floated up to the Bridgwater yards. Gangs of men used to pull up these cargoes along the towing path to the sound of "Chanties," a somewhat picturesque proceeding rendered out of date when steam tugs plied on the river and towed cargoes up. It is clear that in the final stages of the Danish campaign of 878 great issues hung upon the possession of such really strategic points as Comwich, and with Comwich the command of Comwich Passage and the Saxon Herepath.

In addition, I have been fortunate enough to make another discovery in an old MS. of Gaunt's Hospital, Bristol, who held land in Pawlet parish, adjoining the Lower Parret, on its right bank, in which a very significant place-name, "Viking's Pill," is mentioned several times. The date is 1403, and so this name must have existed and been known for more than 500 years after the Vikings were driven from the Parret by King Alfred. The MS. in question can be seen at the Taunton Museum, amongst the "Braikenridge" Collection. This place, easily identified and distant only two or three miles up the Parret from Comwich or Cynuit, must have been a celebrated Pill or anchorage for the Vikings. It lay at a most important point, strategically speaking, just under the Polden ridge, where there were converging lines of ancient communications to Glaston and elsewhere: a site known for centuries afterwards as a "Burgh de Capite Montis," and a meeting-place for all dwellers on either side of the Poldens and Parret, as well as those in the interior regions beyond Glaston and on the Fossway. Here, too, at the very edge of Polden and Downend are the remains of an old encampment or "geweorc," such as the Danes fled to after Edington; here a spring of water; here a place-name of Ballyfield (Baily-field) still existing. The "Ackerman" Cement Works have altered the contour of the slope, and the Great Western Railway has obscured the terminal features of "Chisley Mount," and the old Parret "loop" has gone with its anchorage, but if we reconstruct the primitive features, there can be no doubt about the strategic value of Downend and of Viking's Pill below it. Excavations conducted here in 1909 (*Proceedings*, Som. Arch. Soc., vol. lv), by permission of Mr. Ch. Greenhill, the owner of this most historic site (than which none can be greater in England), have revealed signs of former occupation.

Campaigns, both ancient and modern, have a way of finishing up at the same points, the military terrain remaining unaltered, and if King Alfred's Danish campaign ended upon the

Lower Parret, it simply followed the example of the British and Saxon struggle in 658, when Kenwalch drove the "Waelas" to the Parret from Pen Selwood; or that of the Danish-Saxon fight of 845, thirty-three years before 878, when "Dux Ernulphus cum Sumersaetensibus et Dux Osricus cum Dorsaetensibus et Alstanus Scireburnensis Episcopus" defeated the Danes with great slaughter. This defeat occurred at Pedredsmuth, *i.e.* the mouth of the Parret, and Bishop Godwin, son of a Bishop of Bath and Wells (1517-90), has described it as being more particularly at a place "near Comwich,"—so, indeed, he wrote in his "De Praesulibus," p. 333. Prebendary Earle, in his account of King Alfred's Jewel, calls the Parret "the dividing line of nations." To some extent and with certain reservations this may be true enough, but the Prebendary might have written with even greater truth that the Valley of the Parret was the meeting-place and Campus Martius of contending nations.

In my concluding chapters I have traced the line of a Saxon Herepath, still called so in parts, from Bristol to Comwich and from Comwich to Exmoor. This military way was, originally, the main line of communication between Bristol and the West, dating back to British, perhaps Roman, times. The Passage of the Parret by way of Bridgwater, with which we are to-day so familiar, is comparatively recent. The bearing of this military "Herepath" upon the progress of the Danish campaign of A.D. 878 is obvious. It was intersected by the Parret at Comwich Passage.

Bishop Clifford made a mistake when he assumed that the fort in which Guthrum and the defeated Danes took refuge was at or near Bridgwater. The "geweorc" or "arx" which the Danes had fortified (quam Dani firmaverant) was actually at the foot of Polden and close to the Parret loop, where we should expect it, and near "Viking's Pill." The end of the Poldens was called "Chidley" or "Chisley Mount," also "Cheese Chettle of ye Mount" (Saxton), and the place itself

"Burgh de Capite Montis," the "Mons" itself being "Ethandune Mons," a phrase occurring in Leland's "Itinerary," quoted from a book of the life of S. Neotus, which Leland saw at Glaston. It is a significant phrase, and must surely refer to the Polden "Mons" and not to a Wiltshire "Mons," or to "Bratton Castle,"—never termed Ethandune "Mons" as far as I can ascertain.

Just here a modern railway cutting passes by Dunball Station, and it is said that the workmen, during their task of excavation, unearthed many bushels of bones and skeletons in a field called "Great Crooklands." Close by are other fields called "Crook," which indicate the old Domesday Manor of "Cruce" (or "Cruk") just here, one of the manors of Walter de Douai. "Cruce" is the equivalent of Creek, and implies the existence of a landing-place, as at "Creech St. Michael" higher up the Parret, and "Creech Barrow" near Taunton. The Danes of Guthrum were driven down the Poldens from Edington in headlong rout, until they came to the "Creek," and their temporary refuge. It is curious to reflect that the site of Guthrum's famous surrender may lie almost exactly on the line of the Great Western Railway, and that every day passengers in their hundreds are being whirled across what may be after all, from proofs adduced, one of the most classic spots in England.

WILLIAM H. P. GRESWELL.

Minehead, 1922.

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Chapter I.

Ancient Dumnonia.

AT what time the existing boundaries between West Somerset and North Devon were universally acknowledged is not clear and this uncertainty, dating far back in County annals, has continued even up to modern times. Florence of Worcester (A.D. 1118) in his Chronicle, when recording the Danish Foray up the Severn Sea in A.D. 997, described it as made upon "Watchet in Devonshire." Watchet or Wacet, the small Saxon port on the north coast of Somerset, lies many miles within the County borders and, in Domesday (1086) was certainly located within the County as a place of ancient importance. Moreover, in the Somerset Exchequer Lay Subsidies (1327) Watchet figured as a Somerset "Burgus" or Burgh.

There was the same popular uncertainty about Exmoor and Exmoor Forest, that well-known Royal preserve, which, according to all records we have of Forest Courts and Forest proceedings from the earliest times, was always reckoned a Somerset Forest. This undoubted fact seems to have been lost sight of, or forgotten, when, in the days of Charles I Endymion Porter, a Court favourite asked for Simonsbath as a perquisite for himself describing it in his application as lying "within Devon." Even Sir Henry Spelman in his Catalogue of Royal Forests, *c.* 1670, places Exmoor in Devon.[1]

1. *See* Spelman's Glossary "Forestae."

In this particular case of Exmoor Forest where the Devon Parishes of Countisbury and Brendon and, it may be added, Lynton, and Parracombe, are so close to the north-west corner of the Forest, and Devon landowners and farmers have for so long exercised Common rights on the Forest and along its "purlieus," some confusion may be natural. It was a question about which many appeared to be ill-informed or careless. The antiquary Leland knew the boundaries hereabouts when he wrote in his Itinery (A.D. 1538):

"The bounds of Somersetshire go beyond the stream (*i.e.* the Barle) one way by north west a 2 miles or more to a plain called the Spanne and the Tourres; for there be hillocks of yerth cast up of auncient tyme for markes and Limites between Somersetshire and Devonshire and hereabout is the Limes and Bounds of Exmoor Forest." This would be in the neighbourhood of what is now called "The Duck-Pool Allotment" and "Moles Chamber," and "Shoulsbury Castle," the latter being in Devonshire. But leaving one antiquary for another what can be said of the learned Sir William Dugdale who, in his Epitome of the "Monasticon," locates the alien Priory of Stoke Courcy in Devonshire whereas it lay close to the mouth of the River Parret ?[1]

Or what indeed, to the Reverend Richard Warner of Bath, a west country topographer and pedestrian in his day, who when crossing the Parret at Comwich during one of his "Walks" to the West (1800), noticed what he termed the "hills of Devon" as seen from Comwich Passage, meaning surely the Quantock Hills or, perhaps the "triple-crowned" Dunkery, all in Somerset. To this day, indeed, many visitors to the West think or speak of Exmoor as lying in Devonshire. The very expression of "The Devon and Somerset stag hounds" fosters the illusion although, as a matter of fact, neither the runs or meets of the pack take place as a rule, within Devon, but almost always within the accepted borders of Somerset.

There is, we believe, some grounds for these historical uncertainties about the geography of North Devon and West

1. *See* Strachey's List of Religious Houses in Somersetshire—Stoke Courcy.

Somerset, both countries appearing to have fallen largely within the bounds of one geographical term that covered both, at any rate as far as the mouth of the Parret, if not further east and the term was a general one, *viz.* "Dumnonia," preserved in the ancient "Dyffneint." We feel sure that, in King Alfred's time, when the biographer Asser spoke of "Dumnonia" he meant a larger geographical term than what is meant now by Devonshire. The block of country along the North Somerset Coast, comprising the Hundreds of Cannington, Williton and Carhampton, all Royal Hundreds at Domesday, may have been a debateable region. Exmoor Forest was a kind of non-Parochial area, and indeed, it was not until 1818 that Exmoor Parish, as an ecclesiastical unit, was called into being, after the Royal Forest passed by purchase into private hands, the buyer being Mr. John Knight of Worcestershire. In the twelfth century there was an "Archdeacon of Beyond Parret," so described, meaning the present Archdeaconry of Taunton. The whole question of the evolution of a "Shire" is interesting especially as Somerset and Dorset had the same Shire Reeve (sheriff) up to 1566. Asser, in King Alfred's time describes the county as "Summurtunensis Paga" the region round Somerton (Sea-moor Town). He also mentions a "Ceorl Dumnoniae Comes" who with the help of Dumnonii fought in 851 against the Pagans at Wicgambeorg, *i.e.* Wigborough near South Petherton. At Domesday (1086) we stand upon clearer ground although even then the "Shire" is not so definitely stated as we might expect.

Of certain well-known border families it might be said in one way that they hardly knew whether to call themselves Devon or Somerset. Ancient place-names such as Wootton-Courtenay under Dunkery, recall the family of Courtenay, best known at Powderham Castle in South Devon: Cutcombe-Mohun, the original Domesday possession of the Mohuns of Dunster Castle, reminds us also of the Mohuns of Okehampton in the Dartmoor country: Cutcombe-Raleigh the heritage of the Nettlecombe Raleighs on the Brendons, bordering on Exmoor, (a kindred branch, surely, of the Raleighs who lived at Challacombe-Raleigh, not far from Barnstaple), attest the ramification of a family equally rooted in Devon

and Somerset. Of more than one border family it might be said that, as Horace said of himself "*Vultur an Appulus anceps*," so they could hardly say whether they were more Devon than Somerset or more Somerset than Devon.

From another and completely different point of view there is some warrant for a belief in the extension of "Dumnonia" or "Devonia" eastwards and towards the mouth of the Parrett and this is the variation of Dialect. In this particular instance dialect does not keep within exact county or territorial definitions, and in addition to dialect we must add particular phrases and words which have (or rather had, a generation or so ago), a currency distinguishable to the sensitive ear. Mr. Elworthy in his "West Somerset Word Book" has sufficiently indicated local peculiarities of phrase and intonation. It is really not untrue to say that even to-day there is a Trans-Parret and Cis-Parret mode of expression. Further there is a difference in the way Somerset folk talk on the Quantocks and then on the Brendons and Exmoor.

The Devonian or the Dumnonian dialect is more common around Minehead, Porlock and in the West where it trips pleasantly over the lips of West country lasses. Those who speak it carry with them, in most cases, certain other attractions of character and bearing, of an agreeable kind, now alas, in danger of being swept away by the ruthless waves of cosmopolitanism. Such local variations of Dialect in West Somerset puzzle strangers occasionally and they have been at a loss to think why Bridgwater, for instance, is called "Burge Water." They cannot probe the reason of the metathesis of the letter "r" and they are equally surprised to hear "Purnce" instead of "Prince." When the late King Edward came as "Prince of Wales," to stay at Dunster Castle and hunt on Exmoor he was always designated as the "Purnce of Wales." Mr. Elworthy shows the peculiarity by many examples.

This region of West Somerset was no doubt a frontier zone in the early days of Saxon settlement. The "Waelas" were not driven out or extinguished but were gradually amalgamated. The names of towns and villages still current seem to corroborate this. Williton and Wellington are compounds

meaning the " ton " (Saxon) of the " Waelas," just as Freeman guesses Willsneck on the Quantocks really to be the " Nek " or " pass " of the Waelas and " Lydiard " to be Welsh or Celtic for gate or passage. Wecet or Watchet and Washford (anciently writ Wecet-ford) together with Dunster or Dunestorre, (Domesday Torre), are evidently Celtic. Wiveliscombe or Willscombe, Crowcombe, Nettlecombe, Triscombe, Withycombe, Timbercombe, Buncombe, Bincomb, all keep the Celtic " cwm " or combe. The Celtic " coit," *i.e.* wood, appears in Cutcombe, Lucot, Holnicot, Hopcott. Here and there the Saxon " udu," *i.e.* wood, still pronounced " ood " by the country folk, appears in " Broadwood," near Dunster and " Woodcombe " near Minehead. Minehead itself may be really the Welsh " Mynedd," as it is spelt " Mynett " in old documents. Exe, with its compounds Exford, Exbridge, Exton, is a Celtic river name. Dunkery, the highest point of the hilly country westward, is surely Celtic, and Cantok or Quantock, Polden, Mendip seem to be of similar origin. Cothelston, *i.e.* Cotele's Tor with Cothelston Tor close by must have been partially Celtic on the Quantocks.

The late Sir John Rhys, Professor of Celtic at Oxford, has briefly summarised the progress of the first settlements of Jutes, Angles and Saxons in the east and south of England.[1] In 449 the Jutes had established themselves in Kent, the land of the Cantii and also in the Isle of Wight ; in 477 the Kingdom of the South Saxons (Sussex), surrounded by the great Forest of Anderida, had been founded where the Regni had lived ; the East Saxons took possession of the kingdom of the Trinovantes ; the West Saxons (Wessex) created the nucleus of their Kingdom, which became paramount, by colonising Hampshire at the expense of the original Belgae. In the East the district between Essex and the Wash, which the Iceni held, was taken by the Angles who also founded " North folk " and " South folk " and occupied the coast between the Wash and Humber, formerly the land of the Coritani, whilst further invasions inland resulted in the creation of Mercia, *i.e.* the land of the Marches including most of the inland Counties.

1. Rhys (Prof.), " Celtic Britain."

The Kingdom of the Dumnonii, Duffneint or Devonia presents another story of Conquest or, more correctly speaking, victorious assimilation, in which the Conquerers and the Conquered were merged together, both "Waelas" and "Saeson," in a slow but firm partnership. As we have seen the local etymology and placenames of the south-west region attest this gradual fusion. The sea and river associations were also a separate feature not found to such an extent in the other parts of England and created a new atmosphere in which Saxons and Waelas could live together. In Dumnonia tribal coherence was greater, spreading far and wide under the kind of suzerainty swayed by the "Gwledig" or "Dux Britonum," a titular head of many scattered clans.

To continue our examination of local Placenames, St. Decumans, the mother Church of Williton, tells the moving story of the impact of early Christianity upon this part of Dumnonia, where, also, St. Carantacus came or left his name to Carhampton, St. Dubricius to Porlock (Port-locan), probably from Llandaff and South Wales. Culbone was named after St. Columbanus. Monksilver (silva Monachorum) belonging to the alien Priory of Goldcliff in Monmouth, founded by the Norman barons of Stowey) reveals much later (A.D. 1115) incidents of Church influences. One wonders whether "Druids Wood" below Croydon Hill, and not far from Dunster, takes us back further than any of the places named ; further back than all the associations of St. Decuman or of the sacred springs dedicated to St. David up Cocker (or Coger) Combe on the Quantocks, or St. David's Well near Elworthy on Brendon.

Apart from place-names, river-names, hill-names and tradition, legends, and oral lore of all kinds, which are very numerous and striking, the writer has sometimes thought whilst wandering over the west-country hills, commons, and moors whether the loose stone-walling, dividing fields and indicating Boundaries, may not be distinctly British or Celtic. In many instances these walls, covered with a green network of fern and moss and interlaced with masses of ling and heather, are of great antiquity ; the divisions they indicate are beyond the memory of man and they differ *in toto* from

quick-set hedges and modern embankments. Indeed the art of building a loose stone-wall, like that of building a cob-wall cottage of straw, clay and rubble, seems long ago to have been lost. Loose stone-walls abide for centuries and demarcate villages and Manors showing where immemorial pastures and common rights were exercised. If the Celtic folk could not boast of feudal castles and stone Churches and Chapels they could leave behind monuments of stone and turf, sufficiently lasting to secure the admiration of succeeding generations. Perhaps in such regions as North and South Wales these works of primitive fencers survive in even greater abundance than they do in the highlands of Somerset or Devon. What are called "Castles" still on Exmoor, as Cow Castle near Simonsbath, Bury Castle, Danesborough Castle, were not mediaeval Castles with forts and moats, but simply palisaded forts strengthened with stone walling and sometimes only rude "kraals" for stock. Perhaps, the defensive walls of Worlebury camp, above Anchor Head at Weston-super-Mare, gives us a clue like the escarpments of Brent Knoll, where cattle refuge and a camp, called a Castellarium, went together.

The way Quantock parishes are laid out by the shores of the Severn Sea, in which not only a definite foreshore and sea-frontage is allotted, but, also, sections of the hills and lands of the Quantock Hills themselves, is indicative of a very old but at the same time natural arrangement. It may go back to the days when the hill pasture and commonage belonged to *all* members of the small community. Such a Parish as Kilve has three parts; Kilve by the sea; Kilve in the Vale, or Kilve on the Hill. So too with its neighbours Kilton and East Quantockshead and West Quantockshead. They all present the appearance of long and comparatively narrow strips sloping upwards from the Severn Sea. In all cases the change of pasturage was desirable and, in addition, the woodlands and moors gave turves or "terras," *i.e.* peat or fuel. Each little farm or hamlet had a recognised portion. In Kilve there was a Parleston hill belonging to Parleston; Kilve Manor-Farm had a spot called Kilve Common high up on the Quantock ridge, near Withyman's Pool; "Hill," a portion of Kilve on the east, had part of Hare-Knapps and so on.

This primitive arrangement may date back to Celtic times, before the days of ecclesiastical Parishes and before the days of Baronial and Feudal rights. The deep old Hill Hedge is a monument of ancient work and marks the line where the Commons pasturage, fern, and turf rights began.

In a number of mute ways "Ancient Dumnonia" speaks for itself, its language being a broad hieroglyphic carved and sculptured on hill and sloping combe. Where Royal Forest lands have so long existed in name and being, as on Cantok (or Quantock) Foresta, there has been little to disturb the old features. Even the barns and farm yards tell the immemorial tale where old tenements have existed for a thousand years. The water-furrow, the mill-leat and many another token will lead the explorer to the site of a deep pasturage or a manor-mill that has ground the lord's corn for centuries.

In former days there existed a very ancient Bedelleria East of Parret "and a Bedelleria West of Parret," lasting as a kind of nominal office and handed on in a hereditary fashion from father to son, belonging to the Crown (*pertinens ad Coronam*). This went on up to Tudor times. In the Rolls of the Hundreds of Edward I William le Bret, a Mohun subtenant, is the "Balliva de West de Peret," also, a John de la Lynde and a Walter de la Lynde have the "Bedeleriam de West de Peret," by gift of the King. In the Calendar of Patent Rolls, May 1st, 1311, there is an allusion to the Bailiwick and Serjeanty of "East side of Parret," In 22 Edward III, Philip de Welleslegh held the "Sergeanty of the Bailiwick of the Parrett"; and this was also held in 12 Edward IV, by Cecilia, wife of Thomas Keryel (Calendarium Inq. p.m.) and in 13 Henry VI by John Hill or Hull.[1]

What was this "Bedelleria" or Serjeanty and what duties did it involve? The word was of Saxon origin (Bydel) and this may lead us to conclude that the office existed and was so named in Saxon times. It does not appear to be the same as the office held by the "Bedellus" in Royal Forests,—a somewhat subordinate post.

Nor does it appear to have anything to do with the adminis-

1. *Collinson*, vol. iii, p. 105.

tration of Justice either at fixed Courts or Itinerant Courts. If this Bedelleria was equivalent to "Major Sergantia" as defined by Henry Spelman in his "Glossary" it would involve some military duty such as superintending the King's levies, as a "praepositus" or Provost of the King's Hundreds, or of such Royal Burghs, as Watchet and Taunton, West of Parret; or of Cheddar, Puriton, Overweare, East of Parret. This seems to interfere, at first sight, with the customary duties and the work of the County Sheriffs, (Shire Reeves), but the existence of the Bedelleria in Saxon times may point to some arrangement made about military levies before the exact limits of Counties as they now exist were acknowledged.

Somerset and Dorset did not, as we have noted, have distinct Sheriffs until 1566. At any rate, the River Parret was at a very early date taken as a dividing line. In 894 King Alfred collected troops from every town or Saxon Burgh "East of the Parret" before he defeated the Danes at Buttington. There may have been some military arrangement according to which levies were made with Somerton as the centre or depôt.

The following notices about Somerton are instructive as showing its old-world importance. In A.D. 733 we learn from the A.S. Chronicle that Ethelbald conquered Somerton. In A.D. 856 Eanwulf, Earl of the "District of Somerton," joined a conspiracy against Ethelwulf. In 845 he and Ealstan, Bishop of Sherborne, had fought with the Danes at the Parret mouth and had defeated them. In A.D. 878 Aethelnoth the "Dux Summertunensis," *i.e.* leader of "district of Somerton" stood manfully by King Alfred. Somerton with its ancient Royal Park and Warren figures like a kind of Saxon Windsor at one time in its history, Langport being its harbour on the Parret. It seems to overshadow the Roman Ilchester for a season. There was a king's *curia* there, also, an ancient castle and gaol[1] in the time of Edward III. Collinson says that John king of France was imprisoned there but this is evidently a mistake, as the place of his confinement was Somerton Castle in Lincolnshire, a building of much later date.

1. Wells MSS. Hist. MSS. Commission, vol. i, p. 261.

There is a very interesting notice about Somerton in the Cottonian MSS.[1] with every appearance of truthfulness, to the effect that, in Saxon times, it was "a town of large capacity fortified and walled round by the W. Saxon Kings." King Ina had a palace and castle here and out of the ruins of that Castle it is said the County prison was built "imbattled aboute Castle Lyke in perpetuam rei memoriam." About 877 the town was plundered and laid waste by the Danes under Hinguar and Hubba. These notices have been criticised by some writers (the great importance of ancient Somerton not being visible now), but upon scanty knowledge and imperfect information. Many Somerset antiquaries have gone so far as to deny the existence of the County prison at Somerton in spite of direct evidence[2] proving how little the history of this part of Somerset had been really studied by its resident antiquaries.

There was a "Somerton Intrinsecus ("Somerton Within"), and a "Somerton Forinsecus" ("Somerton Without"), with large properties attached. Somerton had a "Porcheria" or piggery at Roborough Camp in Broomfield Parish; also "Somerton Wood" on the Quantocks, probably a reminder of ancient Saxon days, the town stretching its arms out in many directions as being the kernel and centre of "Summurtunensis paga," although not co-extensive with Modern Somerset.

In 1327[3] Somerton Forinsecus included Cammel Abbatis, (W. Cammel a Muchelney manor), Bridghampton, Yeovilton, Kingsdon, Charlton-Adam and Charlton Mackrell, Littleton, Long Sutton, Aller and Oath. Under the "Burgus" or Borough of Somerton was included Pitney and Hurdecote. The original "membra" of the Royal Manor of Somerton, now such a forlorn and deserted spot, are set forth in detail in the Rotuli Hundredorum of Edward the First. There is the ancient Royal Demesne; the Borough of Ilchester belonging to it; Kingsmore; the *advocatio* or Advowson of the Church of Somerton till King John gave it to Muchelney;

1. Julius F, vol. vi.
2. *See* Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1301, 1304, 1305, 1342, 1348, 1350, etc.
3. Exchequer Lay Subsidies.

part of Werne or Wearne with a fishing station at Kingswere ; West Pitney ; the Warren of Somerton ; tenants in distant Andersfield Hundred ; the manor of North Curry, till King Richard I gave it to the Dean and Chapter of Wells ; Cammel Reginae (Queen's Camel) ; East Cammel ; Sutton ; Langport ; Sedgemore, etc., all comprising a rich possession in marsh and moor. As late as 4 Edward III Edward Earl of Kent (Inq. p.m.) held the Manor of Kingsmore the " Hundred Without," Bedeleria (not described, but probably of Saxon origin) ; the Market Rent from Burgesses in the new Borough. At this stage the Manor had dwindled down from its Saxon magnificence, whether in King Ina's day or in those of King Alfred.

Here undoubtedly was the beginning of Somerset ; here the first part of what we may call " Saxonia " as Bishop Asser terms it. Outside it and around it lay Dumnonia and the old homes of the Dumnonii, greater sea-rovers than Frisian, Saxon, Angle or Jute, who, coming from the shores of the North Sea and the Low Countries, exchanged one region of marsh-lands for another.

The Dumnonii, had a more picturesque background of recorded history than the new comers and invaders. The paths of Dumnonian adventure of old lying along not only tidal rivers, creeks, ports, estuaries, or the like but also over the open seas. The Dumnonians knew as much if not more than Chaucer's Shipman.

Contact with other nations over seas gave them an enviable " mansuetudo," *i.e.* better manners than those possessed by inland and Continental folk. Somehow or other they acquired a racial polish of their own, not in this case to be attributed to the cosmopolitan spirit and laws of Rome, which, indeed, owed much to the Greeks, another sea-faring nation. Does not the Roman poet say that " conquered Greece took captive her conqueror" ? Diodorus Siculus has left it on record that the Dumnonians had been taught to live " in a very hospitable and polite manner," even in the time of Julius Caesar, when he lived, and this is a trait to which Sir Charles Isaac Elton, late member of Parliament for West Somerset, and author of the " Origins of English History," has drawn our attention as deserving of notice. We may be pardoned in

believing that this amiable trait has been handed down and still survives in Devonshire, the very heart and centre of ancient Dumnonia. No one can impugn the native courtesy of an unspoilt West Country home in remote combe or fishing village.

Sea-faring traditions apart from Continental and Tartar savageries, impart certain humanising influences which make us believe that the destinies of the World can best be entrusted to an insular and maritime breed of nations rather than to the locust tribes of Hunnish origin who have tried from time to time to sweep over and engulph Europe. It is a philosophic reflection but perhaps the "Great War" has proved to us clearly enough, over and over again, that the true chivalry of the seas is not found in "land-lubbers," converted into sailors for the nonce, who simply regard their decks from one and only one point of view, *e.g.* as platforms of ruthless destruction under all and every circumstance. No thought of ever salving human wreckage enters into the minds of nomad Huns or the Lords of the Plains.

Moreover, the intercourse of sailors in ancient days brought together the scattered sections of Celts and Dumnonians, wherever they settled, on headland, bay or distant promontory, whether in Cornugallia (Cornwall), Scotland, Brittany, South Wales or elsewhere along the Severn and Irish seas, their intercourse has served to perpetuate common race traditions, language, customs, festivals and religion. A binding thread has run for centuries through the apparently wandering and discursive movements of these sea colonists. Quite recently the illustrious Field Marshal Foch attended a Welsh Eisteddfod and by this act a very ancient historical link was commemorated—a link that was conspicuous in the past when the inhabitants of Wales, Cornwall and Brittany could talk to one another in a common language.

The Dumnonii, if we may regard them as a basic element of our race, take us back to the twilight of our history. As in ancient Attica there were sea-folk or "Parali," different from the men of the plains and forests, so Dumnonii haunted the creeks, bays and havens of the West. Jutes, Angles and Saxons bring in another story linked with Europe and the

North Sea. East Anglia has no such distinctive story, nor the lands of the Iceni and Coritani. It was no land-cinctured Kingdom nor a Forest fastness with doubtful and perilous paths. The air they loved to breathe came not down icy fiords or Arctic regions but from the milder and more equable sea spaces of the great Atlantic. The lungs of the Dumnonii breathed the air of Shelley's West Wind, not the blizzards of the inland "Steppes." Their sons became the great pilots of the outer seas. They were Celts, but different from the Celts of the deep Forests and Celts of the Plains, like Salisbury Plain, a caste almost by themselves, the "salt" of the Celts.

Geography and the tides made the Dumnonii what they were. Havens and anchorages, such as William of Worcester (1415-1482) counts up in Cornwall, Devon, and along the shores of the Severn Sea, were the cradles of their infancy. Caesar knew their aptitudes, and they were not "essedarii" or men with an "essedum" or war chariot, but "mercatores" or sea captains. They knew Vannes and Brittany, and were heroes of many an unrecorded Odyssey. They went down to the sea in ships, and although occupations may not alter the physical basis of a primitive race, they may impress character. Sir C. I. Elton contrasts them with the tribes of the Cotswolds, or the Celts of the Midlands, living in permanent villages, the shepherds and corngrowers of the land. "But," he says, "none of these shared in the culture of the Dumnonii gained from intercourse with foreigners."[1]

If we divide our ancient British or Celtic population, it is better to follow the Attic example and class them by their occupations and environment.

No account of "Ancient Dumnonia" or Dyffneint would be complete without some mention of the great hero of Duffneint, "Rex Arturus." We are puzzled at the silence of the Saxon Chronicle; also that of Gildas, who should have said something about Arthur's famous victory at Badon Hill (Bath ?) about A.D. 520. Nennius credits him with twelve victories over the invading Saxons and he is said to have died

1. See also Chattaway,s "History of Dumnonia," Woodward's "Isle of Wight," Pulman's "Book of the Axe," Davidson's "Roman aud British."

at the Battle of Camlan. Nennius was a Welsh author (796 ?) who lived probably in Brecknock and not far from Caerleon. Amidst much that is so uncertain and from material which is so romantic and picturesque can it be possible at this date to find a real basis of truth ? Can we link the king of legend with a local habitation and a definite tract of land ? It is commonly agreed that " Rex Arturus " was a Cornish Prince and that he was born at Tintagel. Here indeed were all the fit and suitable surroundings for a Prince or Knight of Dumnonia, an inaccessible castle by the sea. This place might indeed be the centre of a principality which, under favourable circumstances, might be the centre of a primitive government, powerful in those days both by sea and land. The coast passage from Tintagel up the Severn Sea and Severn waters, over which this Dumnonian chief held command, gave him great advantages in the struggle against the invading Saxons. " Rex Arturus " also would have had the prestige and, possibly, much knowledge, of warfare inherited from Rome and Roman Imperial occupation of Caerleon. We read of " marine cohorts," attached presumably to the Second Legion[1] as well as the " alae " or wings of cavalry and " Prefects of Cavalry," proving how the Romans had tried to master the difficulties of both sea and land warfare in Britain in the days of Hadrian. At Cadbury Arthur is handed down as a commander of Cavalry.

Both Caerleon and Tintagel, connected by the waters of the Severn Sea, must have provided King Arthur (if a real commander) with two bases of action, one supplementing the other. His ships might have carried a mobile force sweeping up tidal rivers swiftly and unexpectedly, the Parret providing an especially favourable avenue for attack or retreat. It afforded a way to the Polden ridge and to Glaston, in those days a true Island (*insula avalonia*). The valley of the Parret constituted the most likely military terrain, just as the Seine in France gave a waterway to invaders.

Thus our eyes are turned to the camp at South Cadbury and to East and West Camel. Apart from all the rumours and legends which have stuck to Cadbury for centuries the

1. Handbook to the Roman Wall, by C. Bruce.

fort itself commands attention from its commanding situation. From the summit of its triple embankment the eye may range over the Valley of the Upper Parret and its tributaries. To the westward lies Somerton with its old-world port Langport, (surely the Llongporth of Lywarch Hen in which Geraint figured): below is Ilchester (Ivel chester), the old Roman "Castrum," past which the Fossway runs towards Devon and Exeter. The Fossway itself was an important line of communication and it may have been by this road that access was gained to the Upper Parret from the Severn waters and South Wales by way of the Parret mouth and the Poldens and "Street": or, possibly, by way of Axbridge and the Mendips. Below Mendip and northwards towards Avonmouth and Severn waters were two other forts called "Cadbury"; one at Tickenham Parish in Portbury Hundred, the other in Yatton Parish in Winterstoke Hundred, which might both have entered into a scheme of Dumnonian Severn defence against Saxons. It is probable that the first struggle for domination took place along the line of the Upper Parret and by the old Roman roads as we do not hear of a Saxon advance to the mouth of the Parret until Kentwine drove the British to the Severn Sea in 682, following up the victory of Kenwalch in 658 at Peonna or Pen Selwood. The terrain here in North Somerset would surely have fitted in with a campaign of the "Wealas" or British far better than remote Cornwall which was not conquered until the reign of King Egbert.

Thus, speaking from the range of military possibilities, we are attracted to the reputed Castle of King Arthur at Cadbury or Camalet and deem Queen's Camel in Somerset a more appropriate place for a Saxon-British conflict than any place near Camelford in Cornwall. In the Ivel which flows past the old Roman walled town of Ilchester and from which it takes its name we feel that, as Drayton says in his "Polyolbion," it is—

> "The nearest neighbouring flood to Arthur's ancient seat
> Which made the Britain's name through all the world so great,
> Like Camalet what place was ever yet renowned?
> Where, as at Caerleon, oft he kept his table round
> Most famous for the sports at Pentecost so long,
> From whence all knightlie deeds and brave achievements sprung."

When, after a long and obstinate conflict the Saxons finally conquered the Waelas and Dumnonians it is more than probable that the forts and strongholds of the Dumnonian chiefs and princes would, like the ports, harbours and forests of Dumnonia, pass direct into the keeping of the Wessex kings and so, in time, become ancient demesne of the Crown (Vetus dominicum Coronae). Such, indeed, seems to have been the fate of the domain of East and West Camel which, for centuries, figures as part and parcel of the " Forinsecus " or outer Hundred of Somerton, the erstwhile capital of the " Sea moor settlers."

At Domesday, Queen's Camel, (as East Camel appears to have been named), was in the hands of Queen Gytha, Harold's wife, like Puriton (Peritona), the port on the Parret, leading to the Poldens and Glaston. This territorial nexus, linking the reputed stronghold of King Arthur with the Saxon Royal demesne and so with Domesday may have a real historical value. If King Arthur was really slain in this part of Somerset, the story of his conveyance to Glaston across the flooded moors and meres, and perhaps by the Brue or Parret river would be obvious and simple. The coast voyage from Camlan in Cornwall was both long and arduous for a wounded man. In Somerset near Glaston the boat used might have been one of the boats (called " bargiae ") of the great Abbey itself—constructed for river navigation.[1]

In Cornwall and in the neighbourhood of the famous Castle of Tintagel and its primitive harbour of Bude, (useful for Severn trows or light-draught ships of ancient pattern), the continuity of, first, British and then Saxon Royal or princely possession, may be even more striking. The " Hundred of Stratton " in Triconshire, *i.e.* Cornwall, appears in King Alfred's will as a Royal Saxon holding bequeathed by Ethelwolf to his sons. This would take us back to A.D. 800, nearly three hundred years before Domesday. That portion of Cornwall which included Tintagel the reputed birthplace of " Rex Arturus " descended to " Rex Aelfredus " and constitutes now what is probably the oldest " membrum " of the

1. *See* Palgrave's " Normandy," vol. i, p. 740.

THE COUNTY OF
SOMERSET.
English Miles
South Wales
or
Demetia
GLOUCESTERSHIRE
Bristol
Severn Sea
Flat Holme
Steep Holme
To Demetia
Axe (Hidel) R.
Congresbury Monastery
Banwell Monastery
Axbridge
Mendip Forest
Cheddar
Chewton
and Hills
Wedmore
Wells
Bath
Selwood Forest
Roman Road
Alfrid's Tower
Burnham
Mouth of Parrett R.
Portlock
Bossington
Minehead
Carhampton
Hundred
Wreut or Watchet
Cymwich Castle
Aethandune
Edington
Glastonbury
Exmoor Forest
Cannington Hund:
Williton Hundred
Cantref or Quantock Forests
Bridgwater
Polden Hills
King's Sedgmoor
Andersfield Hund:
Petherton Forest
Athelney Island and Abbey
Somerton (Old capital)
Cadbury
Long Sutton
Vale of Taunton Deane
Taunton
DEVONSHIRE
WILTS
Egbright's Stone (Brixton Deuseril)
Shaftesbury Nunnery founded by Alfred
Ilchester
Sherborne
Neroche Forest
S. Petherton
Hardington
DORSET
ROYAL FORESTS AND DEMESNE IN SOMERSET, Temp. King Alfred.
Royal Demesne underlined.
Royal Forests

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Duchy of Cornwall. The possible territorial nexus is even more interesting than that of Camel in mid-Somerset as King Alfred's will takes the Royal title further back. It is not altogether fanciful to suppose that where King Arthur ruled there also King Alfred ruled centuries afterwards.

The Chapel dedicated to S. Juletta and described by Norden as "ancient," three hundred years ago (1548–1626) was a feature of the romantic Castle of Tintagel. Not far off lies the present Parish of S. Juliot, in the Hundred of Lesnewith, part of the Old Duchy of Cornwall. S. Juletta is also the dedication of Lanteglos by Camelford. She was known also in Glamorgan at Llanilid, also at Llanulid Chapel under Defynog, Brecknock, and belongs, apparently, to a very early period. There may be some significance in the fact that this dedication was known and adopted both near Caerleon and also at Tintagel.

Tintagel Castle was always Royal inheritance and in 1245 Richard, Earl of Cornwall, entertained his nephew David, Prince of Wales, in it during his rebellion against Henry III. It was used as a State prison for the Duchy of Cornwall. Here is an interesting entry in the Issue Rolls of 1388, in the reign of Richard II: "To John Slegh the King's butler, keeper of the King's Castle of Tyntagell in Cornwall for price of certain rich vestments, chesuble, albs, scarves, maniples which the king commanded to be delivered to the same John in the said Castle for the use of a certain Chantry for ever to be held within the said Chantry."

Camelford lies in the more ancient Parish of Lanteglos. S. Juletta is said to have suffered martyrdom in the Diocletian persecution (July 30th, A.D. 303) and, if so, she would have suffered death about the same time as Julius and Aaron, the proto-martyrs of Caerleon. Possibly in the history of the Cornish and Celtic Church the S. Juletta dedication may date back to the time of "Rex Arturus" himself and so a link between Wales and Cornwall be established. But this can only be conjectured.

The Hundred of Stratton, inherited by King Alfred from Ethelwolf (possibly Egbert's original conquest at Camelford), to which allusion is made in the Saxon Chronicle under the

year 823, was by far the most important link of the Duchy of Cornwall.[1] Stratton would probably have been reached from the Parret Valley either by sea or, if a land route were taken, by the " Herepath " or military road spanning and connecting " Ancient Dumnonia " coast-wise along the Severn Sea from end to end, a " publica Via " which will be traced from the Parret mouth and Comwich, over the Quantock and Brendon Hills, Exmoor and Barnstaple. King Alfred we know visited Cornwall and hunted in Cornwall and worshipped at the Chapel of S. Guerer and may have passed this way.

This route in the main was used by the troops in the Civil War,[2] a proof of its usefulness as well as its antiquity, and it was the route used by Prince Charles, after Naseby in his journey from Dunster to Barnstaple.

Dunster Castle itself in which the Prince himself and his suite sojourned (1645) may, in ancient times, when the tidal waters flowed up through Dunster marshes to its base, rendering it almost impregnable (to use the words of the author of " Gesta Stephani " describing the war of Matilda and King Stephen) have been not unlike King Arthur's Castle at Tintagel. Dunster had its own little landing-place and a port, just as Tintagel had its " Haven," marked in Norden's map. The ports and harbours of Minehead and Watchet and Porlock would provide a rough parallel to Bossiney-cum-Trevena and Bude, the holder of the adjoining castles controlling, in each case, these ports. Dunster might well have been the abode of a Dumnonian chieftain and a great rallying place for the British hereabouts when the struggle with the Saxons took place. The " Three Hundreds " of Carhampton, Williton and Cannington (Cantuc tune) with Cutcombe might have constituted a block of territory along the North Coast of Somerset falling under the lords of Dunster, who, to this day claim, as successors to William de Mohun the first Earl of Somerset, foreshore rights extending nearly from Exmoor to the Parret. The line of coast would skirt Carhampton, Williton and Cannington Hundreds up to Lilstock, stopping

1. Historical account of the Duchy by Sir John Doddridge, 1714.
2. " Barnstaple," by R. Cotton.

short at Stoke Courcy. That it was not always taken up to the Parret mouth may be explained by the fact that, after the Conquest, Stoke Courcy Castle was built by William de Falaise and he and his successors were given the guardianship of the actual Parret Estuary and landing places at Stolford. This section was kept separate and is still recognized as the Clifford foreshore. At Domesday the above three Hundreds of Carhampton, Williton and Cannington, like Stratton in "Triconshire" (Cornwall) were known as Ancient Demesne of the Crown (*vetus Dominicum Coronae*), dating in all probability, back to Egbert. We possess no actual details of the Saxon conquest westward of the Parret, although there are numerous field and place-names indicating battle grounds on the Quantocks, Brendons and elsewhere but geography helps us. We feel sure that the conquest was slow and that the western highlands towards Exmoor and North Devon and Barnstaple offered a stout resistance. We may fairly argue that as Tintagel was a military centre of a small Cornish principality so Dunster Castle was the same in North Somerset. The little riverine or coast strips have a kind of resemblance both by sea and land. There was no tidal river to open the gates of the interior to resemble the Parret and the Valley of the Parret, but both Dunster and Tintagel were strong sea forts.

It may be asked how and why King Arthur's fame went so far afield and the answer in the main to this question must be that the Dumnonii were a sea-faring folk and that if they ever had such a leader they would naturally spread his name throughout "Celtica" whether in France or Scotland or Ireland. In the account of Hadrian's wall (A.D. 117–138), built it would appear before A.D. 138, there is an inscribed stone with "Civitas Dumnon" on it. The word "Civitas" is somewhat significant and conveys the impression of a name given by the Romans during their Imperial occupation, just as "Gwentonia Civitas" was given to Gwent in South Wales. Other inscribed stones indicate the presence of the Second Legion in the north and one, especially, runs as follows: "The second Legion, styled the august dedicates this building to

the Emperor Hadrian " and the date is supposed to be about A.D. 138.[1]

The headquarters of the Second Legion was Caerleon and the interesting question arises by what route the Roman legionaries reached the Solway Firth. Was it by sea ? or by the Roman Iter ? At any rate the expedition must have been at an early date. Roman works must have been well known to Rex Arturus and he, too, if legend is true, was known in the Civitas Dumnon as he was at Caerleon and along the Severn waters. But, after all, we feel that we must be compelled to leave the great British chieftain in the cloud land of romance. Anyhow, he stands out as a great protagonist and champion of the Christian faith at Glaston, the spiritual centre of Dumnonia. The story of his tomb at the Abbey is told by Giraldus clearly enough and with many circumstantial details, when it was re-opened by order of Henry II, who had learned from the British bards that he was buried between the two Pyramids. Must we dismiss Aneurin, Taliesin, the Welsh Triads and the Elegy upon Geraint by the Prince poet Llywarch Hen, describing the battle of Llongborth, (Langport), as untrustworthy and unreal ? It seems that if we can get such a geographical key as the identification of Llongporth on the Parret, we have partially explained the puzzle of Cadbury.[2]

A word here may be said about the kind of ships and boats of ancient times plying Severn water and threading the estuaries leading from them, as it would be difficult, otherwise, to understand the local history of the region and the enterprises of the sailor sort, the merchant and the hostile invader. The earliest type of boat seems to have been a kind of coracle or corragh,[3] such as that in which the three Scoti came to King Alfred from Ireland in 891, made of two hides and a half. They were on pilgrimage and took provisions for seven days and came to Cornwall about the seventh day. Avienus

1. Handbook to the Roman Wall, by J. Collingwood Bruce, 1885, pp. 114, 162, 166.

2. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. Soc., vol. iv, p. 44

3. A. S. Chronicle

(A.D. 350) describes thus the sailors of an early date: "They furrow the wide rough strait and the ocean abounding in sea-monsters with a new kind of boat. For they know not how to frame keels with pine or maple, as others use, nor to construct their curved barks with fir, but strange to tell, they always equip their vessels with skins joined together and often traverse the salt sea in a hide of leather." Pliny describes the coracle as made of wicker-work (*vitilibus navigiis corio circumsutis*) round which leather was sewed. It is said that boats of a similar description have been used in recent years on the west coast of Ireland, living in seas fatal to craft of more solid material.[1] This type of coracle may still be seen on the Dee and its antiquity is very great. In the voyage of Pytheas (B.C. 300) it appears that coracles were mentioned as well as flat-bottomed punts for the navigation of estuaries. Timaeus, a contemporary of Pytheas, mentions an island where tin is found to which the natives make voyages in their canoes of "wickerwork covered with hides."

Tacitus, (A.D. 60), in describing the Suiones and their boats, says their strength lies in ships as in arms and men. "Their ships are of an unusual build, being double-prowed and so always able to run to shore. They are not worked by sails and have no rows of oars fixed to their sides: but the oars are loose, as in some river-boats, and can be changed from one side to another as occasion requires." The advantage of small double-prowed boats for threading narrow passages and a labyrinth of waters in such marsh regions as those of Mid Somerset of old is apparent.

Caesar's fleet which invaded Britain had warships (*naves longae*) and transports (*naves onerariae*) and, in his day, the pirates were skilled sailors who must have been known up Severn waters. A strange experience to Caesar and his troops was the flow of the tides, higher and more formidable than in the Mediterranean. Whatever the rise and fall on the East Coast it was infinitely greater up Severn Waters. The "Bore" or "Eager" flowing up the Severn and the Parret must have been a revelation to the first Roman legionaries

1. Elton's "Origins of English History," p. 20.

who lived at Caerleon. The Parret tidal wave took boats to Bridgwater, eight miles, and even to Langport, twenty-five miles inland, to the very heart of Somerset. Diodorus (B.C. 50) wrote that the shores of Ictis, *i.e.* the Isle of Wight, were left dry at the great ebbs of the tide but what would have been said of the Parret Estuary and spring-tides there, when the difference between high and low water is fifty feet? Sir Walter Raleigh in his Report on the Severn coast said "that the indraught was long and dangerous and that it was not possible to navigate here without precise observation of tides."[1]

Parret and Severn navigation must always have been very difficult without local knowledge. But on the coast line from the mouth of the Parret westward to Watchet and Minehead descents upon the coast were possible if an oozy bottom could be found for keels to rest in any little bay or sandspit. The tide would float the vessel up, leave it high and dry for some hours and then, at the return, float it off again. But as a rule there was a considerable risk about this kind of attack. Sometimes a portion of a fleet would get aground and become separated until the return of the tide, as happened in the battle of King Alfred's forces against the Danes in A.D. 897, described in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Report says that on one occasion when the Danes made a foray up the Axe to Bleadon and moored their boats in receding waters an old woman cut the cables and left the boats to drift down stream, much to the discomfiture of the heathen who were attacked and slain. As late as the period of the Civil War an attacking troop-ship from South Wales made a descent upon the North Somerset coast near Watchet, probably at Blue Anchor. The opposing force, in this case mounted men, seeing how the ship was left high and dry, to wait for the return of the tide, made an attack in force and held the ship at their mercy.

West of Watchet, the old harbour of the Quantocks and connected with the ridges by the ancient road leading up to Staple Plain by way of Doniford (St. Donat'sford), the facili-

1. "Life of Sir W. Raleigh," by Edward Edwards, 1868.

ties for these shore attacks were not great, owing to the physical configuration of the coast beyond Minehead. Porlock itself was a port, like Watchet, but landing here was not, and could not be, of a hap-hazard nature and the attack, if made, involved a grip upon the surroundings. Towards Devon it may be easily seen that the high and precipitous cliffs past Countisbury, Glenthorne, the North Foreland and so to Lynton and Ilfracombe were a sufficient bulwark. Moreover, the whole of this coast was always exposed to the sudden north-west gales, so prevalent even in summer. No, the danger spot of "Ancient Dumnonia" was always the mouth of the Parret, the real opening to the interior of Somerset. If Cynwith or Comwich passage at the entrance of the Parret could be forced and the ridge of Polden mastered, the way was open and the neck of the Western Peninsula was cut along the line of the Parret. The Vikings knew this and made more than one attack upon the Parret mouth. Viewed in this way the reason why King Alfred selected Athelney is fully apparent. This strategy was defensive and made use of all natural advantages. To think that the Danes would attack Barnstaple and sail up the Taw or Torridge to reach the interior is to misunderstand the original plan of campaign. An attack on Porlock would be more intelligible as success there might have opened up the Exe Valley and to Exeter across Dunkery.

The form and shape of the Viking's war-vessel is well known and it is said that a specimen was exhumed at Newport, the well-known anchorage on the tidal river Usk. To be effective a Viking's attack would need the usual sea-going type and when these reached their anchorage as at "Botestall," near the mouth of the Parret or "Viking's Pill" under the Polden ridge, they needed a different type for inland penetration, say, if possible, up to Langport. When the Northmen (*Normannii*) went up the Seine in King Alfred's time they used, as Archbishop Hincmar tells us, one hundred large boats, "which our people call Bargias" (*quas nostrates bargias vocant*). A French author, Dudo de St. Quentin, gives incidentally a description of the "Bore" or "Eager" up to Rouen there,

varying with the phases of the moon.[1] Such a small tidal river as the Axe, with narrow channel, would be surely impassible for the Viking's ship. When King Alfred built his war-vessels to fight the Danes Sir John Spelman described them as higher (*altiores*) as well as swifter and more stable, but the height referred to the "poops" (*puppium altitudo*). The old type of the ships of the Veneti was improved upon. But whilst the ships of the Veneti were impelled chiefly by leather sails (*pellibus*), King Alfred trusted principally to oars (*remis*)—of which each ship had a large number. The names given to Alfred's ships were "Ciulae vel Galeiae." The advantage of high poops would give marksmen a better "fighting top." The larger number of rowers would help quick manoeuvres and getting to windward or wherever the advantage lay. However, we are here at the very cradle and infancy of the British fleet and this story of first evolution from early types is interesting to all students of our early naval annals. Here, as in other departments, that great and wonderful King Alfred figures as the great reformer. It is said that he used the skill and knowledge of Celtic or Dumnonian craftsmen. The question of coast and river defence was never more obvious than in Severn waters and at the mouth of the Parret. King Alfred's ships were "shaped neither like the Frisian nor the Danish but as seemed most efficient." They were used to block the passage on the Lea from a port to the outer sea. On the tidal Parret such a use would have been most obvious and most profitable. The enemy's ships were called "Esks" and King Alfred's "Long ships" twice as long as the others.[2]

The topography of the Valley of the Parret and the character of the adjoining littoral of North Somerset along the waters of the Severn Sea with its marvellous flux and reflux has always had, both in peace and war, a great influence upon the history of "Dumnonia," whether we go back to Roman times or to the picturesque and more romantic age of "Rex Arturus" or any other possible Dumnonian Prince. In these

1. Palgrave's "Normandy and England," vol. i, p. 471.
2. Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 897.

circumstances geography can explain history and, if periods of history are doubtful, it can strengthen even what at first sight and at first findings, seems to be hypothesis. Natural features have altered and generations of "sewer commissioners" and engineers have changed the primitive "moors" and thus a certain imaginative faculty must be requisitioned to replace old and primitive features, *e.g.* to put the canalised stream Cary back in its channel. But the imagination that replaces realities is as trustworthy as the reality itself. The silt of ages blots out a landing-place but the record remains. Put the landing-place and port back and the hieroglyphic is easy to read.

Again, deep draught vessels have taken the place of light-draught ones. Iron and steel have supplanted the oak. Up the Severn Sea and in the Forest of Dean Great Britain, not much more than a century ago, hoarded and prized the oaks that served for keels to her splendid men of war. Old William of Worcester, that notable Bristol Chronicler and careful observer of ports, harbours and havens in Severn waters, where naves, naviculae (little naves) called "wodbryshys, cachecys, pycardes" traded hither and thither, has left many a picture of maritime realities in 1400–1500. The "armada" story provides another great episode, so does the story of Bridgwater and of the Blake merchants when venturous Turk challenged Britain in Severn waters and the Algerine pirate showed his head. But not for long. To-day the refluent waters carry another great tale especially in South Wales and Barry docks, Cardiff. How crowded the history! how varied the annals! Well may we brood over these Severn waters and their tidal rivers and wonder at Times mighty changes. That old dug-out in Glastonbury Museum takes us far back, so do the hearth-stones of the Lake Village! So does "Squire Phippens" great ship. What epochs for Dumnonia! Perhaps in the ever-restless tide of events, as restless as the Severn waters themselves beating against the cliffs, a small monument of antiquity here and there survives—an old boat that is double-prowed and of a ancient pattern, still ploughs its ancient tracks, like the Watchet "flatty" of flat-bottomed, doubled end built with a "baler" carved out of a single

piece of wood and identical in pattern with those found in Viking's ships.[1] In Kingston-Seymour Church there used to be a pattern of a ship of ancient build carved in wood. On the Parret mudflats the primitive "mud horses" are still used by fishermen and shrimpers.

1. *West Somerset Free Press*, March, 1922.

CHAPTER II.

Dumnonia and Glaston.

DUMNONIA, therefore, as a geographical term, seems to lie in the background of our national, and especially West-Country, annals, as a somewhat dim and uncertain region, regarded as a half fabulous realm, not to be defined by modern counties or by modern Bishoprics, although the name has survived in Devon. It has long since dropped out of use and finds little mention in our text-books. William of Malmesbury could say "*In Dumnonia quae Devenscire dicitur*" and render himself intelligible to men of his own age (1143); and, further back still in our history, Asser, the biographer of King Alfred, could quote "Dumnonia," as already noted, probably meaning Devon and part of Somerset reaching up to the Parret mouth and, perhaps, further east still, towards Bristol (A.D. 875–900). That there was a Church if not a distinct Diocese in Dumnonia, we may infer from a letter written by Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherborne in A.D. 704 who gave a kind of pastoral charge to Gerontius, King of Dumnonia, and to all priests (*sacerdotes*) living in Dumnonia. The view of Aldhelm, who was partially Romanized, was that Dumnonia was rather uncivilized (*dira*), a view we need not endorse, as he probably meant that the Celtic Church was not sufficiently imbued with Roman and papal influences.

The old Roman geographers used the name of Dumnonia and had a definition for it, Claudius Ptolemaeus (A.D. 150) placing the Dumnonii next to the Durotriges or Dorsaetas, *i.e.* men of Dorset, on the east, and extending this region to "Volida," *i.e.* Fowey or Falmouth in Cornwall. He gave them Isca Dumnoniorum (Exeter) and Caerleon. On the Coast

of Somerset Dumnonia included Uxella on the Axe and Uphill[1] above Brean. This certainly would include "Anchor Head" on the present site of Weston-super-Mare with the old fort of Worlesborough above it. It is worth noticing that a later Roman geographer, Caius Julius Solinus, (A.D. 238), extended the Dumnonii much further up the Severn and placed them opposite to the Silures.

Dr. Guest in his "Origines Celticae,"[2] conjectures that the bounds of Dumnonia stretched from Malmesbury to the Land's End and that the kings of Dumnonia had added to this realm by conquest and that, in the days of Gereint, Dumnonia must have been in power and dignity the first of the British Kingdoms. He writes: "It is not my object to trace the several stages of decay through which the power of Dumnonia passed as it melted away before the ascendancy of England. The more intimate relations of this British Kingdom were no doubt with the kindred races of Wales and Brittany, but the influences it exercised over the national progress and even over the literature of its English neighbours were by no means of slight account, though they have been strangely overlooked. They afford, I think, the only solution of some of the most intricate problems connected with our early history, and materials for such inquiry may be scanty, but they are not altogether wanting."

The three chief "perpetual choirs" of the Isle of Britain were: (1) That of Llan Iltud Vawr in Glamorgan; (2) That of Ambrosius in Ambresbury, near Salisbury; (3) That of Glaston. In each of these choirs there were 2,400, that is there were one hundred for every hour of the day and night in rotation perpetuating the praise of God without rest or intermission. What may be termed the spiritual life of an enlarged Dumnonia was centred around these places about A.D. 500. This implied a kind of national unity from Salisbury to the Land's End. When, later on, the Bishopric of Sherborne was formed and Aldhelm ruled over "Selwood-

1. *See* "George of Ravenna," p. 424. Urbs ab Uxellae ostio longe separata. Fluvius est Axe—Uxella forte est Axbridge: also "History of the Ancient Britons," by J. A. Giles, D.C.L., vol. ii, p. 102.

2. Vol. ii, pp. 270–2.

shire," this inland continuity from Wiltshire westward was slightly impaired about A.D. 700. But Dumnonia unity was preserved along the north coasts and littoral of the Severn Sea, being in its very nature maritime and its inhabitants seafaring. Glaston and Llan Iltud Vawr preserved their Celtic traditions. It was a matter of navigation and of a sea-and-river-intercourse, easier in its way than travel through inland forests and less perilous.

That road or highway, possibly of Roman origin, linking Dumnonia and its northern parts together, leading from Bristol (and Bath) westward to Uxella or Axbridge, Brent and so to Cynwith or Comwith passage on the Parret was first constructed with a strategic and maritime purpose. It was the trunk road of ancient Dumnonia for all purposes. It helped the pilgrim also on his way to Glaston and was connected with all land routes and especially with the sea routes across Severn. Glaston also had its river anchorages, its canals and moorland boats (*batelli*) and river craft. The tidal wave swept humble currough or larger barge and vessel up to its sacred portals.

If we adopt Sir Charles Elton's definitions of ancient Siluria[1] and infer that it meant a block of Wales including Glamorgan and Hereford, as well as Monmouth, it will be seen that the Dumnonii must have been found some distance up the Severn. Bath and Bristol (Bristowa, the town of the British); both with churches dedicated to St. Michael, would have been occupied by them. Gildas, our oldest historian, who knew the Severn well, mentions a certain "King of Dumnonia" Constantine by name (Dumnoniae tyrannus), as apart from Vortipore, King of Demetia which we assume to mean geographically, South Wales and not simply Pembroke. The name of Constantine, it may be noted, introduces early Christian association (300–400). To-day there is a Cornish parish near Falmouth called Constantine where it is said (although the rumour cannot be substantiated) silver coins of Arthur were found near the church.[2] Constantine, also,

1. Elton's "Origins of English History," p. 141.
2. Lewis' "Topographical Dictionary," vol. i, p. 509.

was the name of a King in Scotland, who gave up his Crown and lived as a recluse amongst the Culdees or regular " clerici " of St. Andrew (A.D. 943), the name thus serving as a link between Cornwall and Scotland. For centuries, since the days of Constantius Chlorus, the father of Constantine, the name has been interwoven in British annals.

Constantine appears in the Arthurian genealogies—and one of that name is reputed grandfather of Rex Arturus himself.[1] The first Council of Arles (A.D. 314) took place under the auspices and during the reign of Constantine the Great. At this Council Eborius, bishop of York, Restitutus, bishop of London, and Adelfius, bishop of Caerleon, attended. Silvester, bishop of Rome, was not present, but he was treated a " par inter pares " and is addressed by assembled bishops as " most beloved brother " in a letter sent to him.[2] This period of Church History is most interesting and the British traditions were passed on to the Saxon Kings in due course of time who claimed a kind of spiritual inheritance with the British Crown. King Edgar, the descendant of Ina and Alfred, said, " I have the sword of Constantine," with reference to his task of clearing away some abuses that had crept into the Church.[3] Constantine's traditions were not Papal or Benedictine and take us far back to pure and unsullied pages of our Church history. These were eastern rather than western. St. Jerome writing with a direct reference to the remote British Church said " The Britons who live apart from our world, if they go on a pilgrimage, will leave the western parts and seek Jerusalem, known to them by fame only and by the Scriptures."[4]

Dr. Challoner, a Roman Catholic historian in his " Britannia Sancta " (1745) endorses the report that St. Teilo, a Welshman and great traveller, was consecrated by the Patriarch of Jerusalem. He calls Dubricius Archbishop of Caerleon, and says that he ordained S. Samson and S. Theliau.

1. Ashmolean Rolls, Bodleian.
2. " The Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain," by J. Collier, p. 24.
3. " Adam of Domerham," vol. ii, p. 667.
4. Epistle to Marcella.

This throws a light upon the Cornish and Welsh Churches. There is a hint also of that ancient evangelisation as typified by the teaching of St. Piranus, or St. Kieran where, even up to late years, at Perranzabuloe, the Cornish tinners have kept his feast and held a fair on the same day near his church. Close by, is St. Piranus's well, useful for the cure of diseases and, not far off, St. Piranus's "Round," one of the ancient Cornish amphitheatres for the celebration of games. By these means for centuries the existence of the old church has been kept alive. Christianity came to Severn waters first as a seed born at random by the winds of heaven, tended and watered by the hands of loving converts by the banks, it might be, of the Usk, Tavy or Wye; thence it was transplanted by Celtic sailor saints to distant shores, spread by the zeal of devoted missionaries till the time of St. Augustine when Pope Gregory reached out his hand to reap the harvest (597).

The subject of the influences of the East filtering through from Palestine, Asia Minor and so to Marseilles and Gaul is a wide and interesting one, replete with historical suggestions and touching the Celtic Church. The very words "church," "ecclesia," "episcopacy," "priest," "deacon," "Bible," "monk," "eremite or hermit," "cænobite," "cœnobium," "abbot," and many others were taken over in all probability, straight from the east and not through the medium of Rome.

Papal Rome introduced other and different influences and this period may be said to begin roughly speaking, with the mission of St. Augustine. Upon that long and antecedent Romano-British period lasting up to A.D. 600 we should have hailed less fragmentary historians than Gildas and Nennius and welcomed definite information of a direct kind. Here are some of the darkest pages of our Christian annals. But in reality, the Celtic Church gives us quite enough to prove its original character and meaning. Christian truth was drawn from such springs as that of St. Piranus and the waters were pure. Baptism in such water was sufficient. Signs there were in abundance of the greatness of Imperial (not Papal Rome) still left in the land, lasting till the days of

Giraldus Cambrensis, in the twelfth century,[1] who waxed eloquent over the existing remnants of the old Imperial civilisation at Caerleon where the "Second Legion" was quartered. Here were ruins of great palaces, beautiful baths, remnants of temples, theatres, walls, hypocausts and a huge tower rising above the waters of the Usk. The palaces with gilt roofs imitated the Roman pride as built by Roman masters.

In addition to noble ruins and works of advanced civilisation, Imperial Rome, the Rome of the Caesars, the mistress of the then known world from the Euphrates and Persia in the east, up to furthest Britain in the west, bequeathed to the Dumnonii and Silures, and, indeed to Britannia generally, the idea of a ruling caste and a "Stirps Romana." It was not exactly dynastic nor was it hereditary. The trail of the Imperial purple was too glorious to be forgotten. If Julius Caesar himself had never come as far west as Dumnonia and Wales, Vespasian and Titus the conquerors of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) had brought her cohorts thither, and, as Sir John Rhys surmises,[2] had fought and subdued the Belgae and Dumnonians who occupied nearly the whole south-west of Britain. "Vespasian's camp" is still so called in Somerset. Sir Francis Palgrave has aptly said that the Dominion of the Bretwaldas began by being an imitation of the Imperial sovereignty of Rome. Ethelbert impressed the Roman wolf upon his rude Kentish coins. The exaltation of this idea was surely nowhere more conspicuous than in "Britannia Prima" and "Britannia Secunda." Therefore when the last Roman legionary left Caerleon Roman Imperial sovereignty might have terminated, but the world-wide prestige of it survived and nowhere more than in Dumnonia. The legacy was imperishable.

Imperial Rome bequeathed also the Latin language the "lingua franca" of the world. It must be always remembered that this language came to Britain through *two* main conduits or channels; the one preceding St. Augustine, and the other afterwards; the one flowing directly from Imperial

1. *See* Itinerary of Giraldus Camerensis, chap. v.
2. "Celtic Britain," p. 79.

Rome the other from Papal and generally Monkish and Benedictine sources. The earlier period attracts our attention and it belongs more to classical than to post-classical times, until we get to the jargon best illustrated in words and phrases found in Du Cange's Glossary of "Mediae et infimae Latinitatis." Naturally on a question of this sort, although we must not look for a Cicero or Livy in Britain it looks as if classical words and phrases taken over by the Dumnonii and all the Waelas as a direct legacy of Roman conquest were preserved with care. Monmouth and Caerleon may have been a centre where, if anywhere, Latin idioms were taught and written. Gildas was the first historian of the Severn Sea. In the Welsh language such words as castrum (Welsh caer) were preserved: also vallum (W. gwal); pons (W. pont); portus (W. porth); murus (W. mur); Foss (W. fos); insula (ynys as ynys witrin or insula Avalonia and elsewhere); mons (W. mynedd); turris (W. tor); palus (W. pawl); mare (W. mor) and to these anchora, aestuarium, zabulum, sand, as in Perran zabuloe, might be added. Such words go back to the first occupation by Imperial Rome.

The Saxons, Angles and Jutes were different from the Dumnonii. They came, first of all, as a savage and unlettered people from the shores of the North Sea; such, indeed, as Boniface, the apostle of Germany, found the Frisians in his day (A.D. 700). They received Christianity through the medium of the already converted British and, when they came west, they met the Dumnonii who were, as already pointed out, "humaniores," *i.e.* more civilized in manners, customs and general habits of life and thought. After the Roman legionaries had departed and the secular rule of Rome was over (A.D. 400–500) there was found in the land a residuum of Romano-British, especially in Wales and on the shores of the Severn and Severn estuary; people who were the offspring of the union between the official residents of Roman extraction and the native British population. Naturally, these preserved, more than the rest, the glitter and fame of the Imperial City. From this point of view the name of Claudia, the Christian wife of Pudens, an early convert to the faith, (if we may credit the story), is more interesting than

even the name of Bertha the wife of Ethelbert (A.D. 600), daughter of Haribert, King of the Franks who helped to introduce Christianity at St. Martin's Church, Canterbury, where St. Augustine preached.

The Saxons, although virile invaders, lacked in themselves the ideas of Imperial lineage and of noble and illustrious ancestry, such indeed, as Rome in those days alone could give. They were "novi homines" and they strengthened their position by allying themselves with the Romano-British strain and the British chiefs. Indeed on the question of Crowns and prestige the headship or Paramount chieftainship of the British tribes were termed a "Benedicta Corona" as if it carried not only fame, but also some invisible blessing as a Christian Crown. This idea appealed most strongly to King Ina (688), the greatest of Saxon kings in Dumnonia after King Alfred. He was the restorer and benefactor of Glaston, the creator of Sherborne, (Bishop Aldhelm being his kinsman), and the founder of Wells, if we may follow this entry in the documents of Wells Cathedral—("To the poor at the obit of King Ina, the original founder of the Church.")[1]

The very fierceness and intensity of the Saxon nation which displayed itself originally in the fury of war and combat, became, under the spell of Christianity, ardent and enthusiastic in promoting the Christian cause. The unsurpassed annals of Imperial Rome, like the trunk or bole of a stately tree overshadowing the world, magnified the later pretensions of Papal Rome grafted upon it by the cunning skill of the teachers, and the Saxons were not instructed enough or learned enough to distinguish the difference between branch and bole. How, indeed, could they? How could they follow the policy and reasoning that made the "Pontifex Maximus" of the old Roman Republic "the Pontiff" and Spiritual Head of the whole world? King Alfred could know and appreciate the vast difference between Imperial Rome and later Papal Rome, especially from his own experiences in the ninth century, but not King Ina, who humbly laid down his "Benedicta Corona" and died a monk at Rome. No doubt King Alfred's personal

1. Wells MSS. Hist. Commission, vol. ii, pp. 245 and 250.

insight into the inner history of Papal Rome in his century was sufficiently enlightening in itself and turned him back (as we shall see it did) in quest of the purer and more simple ideals of the Celtic Church under Asser.

Ancient Dumnonia, a realm without an earthly Capital, scattered widely along the edges of the profound ocean seems, in the absence of exact chronicles, to involve in its meaning a kind of past spiritual sphere and influence recalling the age of Perranzabuloe, *i.e.* " St. Pieran on the sand," in Cornwall, or, indeed, that of old William of Worcester's reputed 140 churches, with lands extending from St. Michael's Mount towards the Scilly Islands, once flourishing now lying beneath the ocean. The bells seem to ring, fathoms deep, like the bells of Forrabury, and to the believing ear some sound floats up from the waves. Nevertheless, there is tangible reason for believing in this unrecorded realm of the past. A stranger wandering along the shores of Glamorgan and over the region of Kenfig, swept by storms may, in the utter wilderness caused by nature and nature's floods, recognise in a similar fashion, a former reality, when church towers and castles and even manor houses and tenements, raised up their heads. To-day there is nothing to be seen but seagulls, nothing to be heard but the wild note of the curlew.

Along the estuary of the Parret, at such a place as the Botestall, the old Saxon name for an anchorage at the river's mouth, a strange noise can often be heard like the uncertain tolling of a bell sounding from beyond the great mud spaces, where, centuries ago, it is said grew a great forest, now submerged. Here, as off St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall, according to William of Worcester, lands have been stolen and kept by the waves, encroaching age after age and, with the aid of storms and tempests winning for Father Neptune new regions to his sway. The tolling bell at the Parret's mouth sounds like a kind of requiem over dead spaces, fitful and uncertain, as if struck at random and by some unseen hand in concert with the fluctuation of wind and wave. In truth, this Parret bell, suggestive as it is in the realms of fancy and, (especially in the glimmering of evening's growing darkness), a weird incomprehensible sound—is a modern reality and

serves a real purpose. It is a bell-buoy warning vessels off the proximity of the Gore sands and of the wreck of the *Murker*. Fancy can draw round it what tales it likes of departed realms and vanished church towers as at Kenfig or St. Michael's Mount. Who, indeed can set bounds now to the ancient annals of Kenfig ? Who, indeed, can picture the old world activities of the harbour of Porth Kerry or Porth Cerig, founded by St. Cerig for the benefit of the souls of the sailors ? Behind the ancient anchorage lingers the vision of ancient activities.

Barry Docks seem to dwarf the little ventures of the past but there is some soul behind the life of St. Baruc ; more history than we know of behind the names of SS. Cyricus and Juletta at Caerleon itself. Some may say that it is a kingdom of romance you are invoking ; some shadow of Arthurian realm ; some " simulacrum " of a history dear to such a fanciful annalist as Geoffrey of Monmouth or to the dreamer who wanders by those triple banks and escarpments of Cadbury—down which King Arthur's steed, shod in silver tramps in moonlight ! Very beautiful ! and very, very romantic ! but not history !

In spite of all this there is a temptation to cling to some kind of golden age of inspiration ; to some primitive story that, apart from all its dressing and antique clothing, means something real in the spiritual and religious world, for the Dumnonii were Christians long before the uncouth Saxons, and Dumnonia was a vast Christian sphere, if not a mapped out Diocese, long before Aldhelm ruled at Sherborne in that Province which was termed " Selwoodshire " ; or long before a Bishop of Devonshire had his " Bishop's Settle," first at Tawton, and then at Crediton ; or long before indeed, a Bishop of Bath and Wells lived at Wells.[1]

In speaking of Dumnonia we cannot think along sterotyped lines. Bishoprics are subsequent definitions, ancient as many of them are. We think more of Abbots and Monasteries, of wandering sailor Saints, of the first glimmerings of Christian light and inspiration ; or of stone-roofed cells like Macdara's

1. Godwin de Praesulibus.

oratory off the Galway coast; of watery wildernesses; of lonely perches of eremites and cœnobites; not of stately Gothic Architecture. Above all, in looking for the heart and spiritual centre of wide and extra-parochial Dumnonia the eye rests at last upon Glaston and the reputed site of the wattled cell.

Mr. Rowland Prothero (Lord Ernle) in his book on "The Psalms in Human Life" has pointed out how wide the wanderings of the early Celtic saints and how great their zeal: "Now, in the spirit of Antony and the anchorites of the Egyptian Desert, the storm-beaten islands of the Atlantic Ocean were tenanted by eager solitaries who, by day and night, from year's end to year's end, amid the roar of the waves and the wild screams of sea-birds, sang the Psalms to God. Now, in another aspect of the same religious fervour, men left their wattled chapels, their stone oratories, and wooden shrines in Ireland and Scotland to carry the Gospel message to the heathen. Columban at Luxeuil and Bobbio, Gall in Switzerland, Cataldus at Tarentum, Virgilius at Salzburg, Donatus at Fiesole, were among the Celtic Saints who made their influence felt in Western Europe from Iceland to Southern Italy." Of these Saints Columban was remembered at the old chapel of St. Columban in the ancient Forest of Cheddar[1] and also at Culbone, near Porlock; St. Donatus at St. Donats in Glamorgan and also at Doniford near Watchet in Somerset.

The work and zeal of these missionaries were not impaired by the burden of too much dress and ritual; by the growing volume of Canonical Law; or by the latter-day accretions of non-scriptural doctrines. They carried with them the Bible only and the simple story of the Cross of Christ. Contrast indeed, some modern methods of African conversion. Main issues have been blinded by irrelevant matters. Colenso controversies and Kikuyu disputes have not helped the cause of the simple Gospels. Could the arguable difficulties of the Pentateuch save or lose a Zulu soul? Even Cardinal Lavigerie, the modern "Apostle of Algeria," had to carry somewhat reluctantly, we believe, the burden of the late

1. Wells MSS.

Doctrine of Papal infallibility into African sands. He would have been wise if he had dropped it there as an African mirage.

In the History of Christianity a useful thesis might be propounded as to whether the great cause was in the past helped more by continental advocates or by British and Celtic Saints ? A survey of events might show that Europe owes more to British Islands than the British Islands to Europe. Herein lies a deep and far-reaching historical question. Perhaps a study of such a work as Lord Bryce's " Holy Roman Empire " might help us and show how ineffectual the fleeting reigns of Popes and Emperors. In Elizabethan time the good old British ship had, under the superintendance of Jewel and others, to jettison a lot of medieval lumber and to have the keel cleared of medieval barnacles, but the ship was the same under proper pilots.

In the annals of British Christianity the Psalms were a great source of inspiration and an instrument of teaching. The great Columba of Iona made them his " vade mecum " and took them always with him as his most valued possession. It is said that he obtained his copy from Finnian and that he copied it by stealth. Hence there was a dispute as to the rightful possession of the copy and a battle amongst the clans known as " The Battle of the Psalter " and under the name of Cathac or " The Battler," the O'Donnells, for centuries carried to their battles the silver case containing Columba's reputed copy of the Psalter as a pledge of victory. Saint Cuthbert, the spiritual descendant of St. Columba is said to have died to the refrain of the sixtieth Psalm. King Alfred, inheriting the inspiration of the Psalms always carried with him in the folds of his garments a little book with extracts from the Psalms and a daily course, the beginning of his " Enchiridion " or Handbook, as Asser tells us. On the eve of the battle of Edington St. Neot appeared to King Alfred and promised victory. " The Lord shall be with you : even the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle who giveth victory unto Kings." (*Psalm* xxiv, 8).

In the Welsh colleges the use of the word " Cor " (choir, chorus) and Bangor (high choir) may point to an antiphonal singing of the Psalms. It was with a Psalm that Gwynlliu,

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WEST VIEW OF GLASTONBURY.

WITH CHURCHES OF ST. JOHN AND ST. BENIGNUS, AND ST. MICHAEL'S TOWER.

the warrior, father of Cadoc was converted from the life of violence to that of an anchorite. He is commemorated at St. Woollos the patron Saint of Newport, Monmouthshire. In the picturesque life of Patrick the Saint, with his twelve Priests and the boy, Benignus (of Glaston fame), is said to have vanquished the Druids at that notable meeting at Tara by chanting the Psalm " Some put their trust in chariots and some in horses ; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God."[1]

As Ireland has been so often quoted as the nursery of Celtic Evangelisation it is an interesting question, left doubtful and ambiguous in the past, as to the influence of Glaston upon Ireland or of Ireland upon Glaston. Such a book as " Ireland and the Celtic Church " by Professor Stokes hardly mentions Glaston at all. Yet, obviously, there must have been frequent communication between the Severn and Ireland. From St. Michael's Hill at Bristol to St. Michael's Hill above the Liffey at Dublin sailors must have passed from time immemorial. Here was the merchant's, the pilgrim's, and missionary's route whether from or to Ireland ; from or to the Continent. Even in modern times, and within the memory of living men, Irish labourers, engaged only on hop-picking in Kent used to come from Dublin or Waterford to the mouth of the Parret and find their way over the Poldens, past Glaston, to the eastern Counties. Professor Bury in his life of St. Patrick thinks that, amongst the places suggested for his birth and up-bringing, Gywr or Gower on the Severn shore was the most likely. At Glaston itself, the Island of Becaria or Beccary, where stood St. Bridget's Church or Chapel, was called " Parva Hibernia " from the number of pilgrims that resorted thither. At Glaston itself, on November 9th, was the festivity of St. Benignus or Benin, the disciple of St. Patrick and, for some time, the Archbishop of Armagh. He was supposed to have lived an anchorite's life at Ferramere, close to Glaston, where he died. In 1091 his relics were translated to the Abbey of Glaston.[2] The history of the old Monastery is full

1. Prothero's " The Psalms in Human Life."
2. William of Malmesbury's " Antiquities of Glaston."

of references to St. Patrick, which, whether we interpret them as completely trustworthy or not, point, anyhow, to the existence of ancient reports. Indeed, in A.D. 439 St. Patrick is said to have visited Glaston and to have repaired the Church of St. Michael on the Tor itself. Further, St. Patrick the younger, the nephew of the great Irish Saint, is said to have been buried in the old church.

If St. Patrick was born near Severn waters it is reasonable to conclude that he may have received his Latin education in the "classes" or "collegia" of Monmouth or Glamorgan. There was no place in Ireland at that time where he could have gained the requisite knowledge for travel and missionary teaching. There was no place in the bounds of Hibernia like Caerleon or Caerwent. No doubt the question of the birthplace and up-bringing of St. Patrick is a thorny one and old biographers and annalists have contrived to weave in miracles with facts, but have critical biographers paid sufficient attention to Professor Bury's theory ?

St. Finnian (d. 550) called "tutor of the Saints of Ireland," founder of Clonard at the head waters of the river Boyne, studied for thirty years under St. David and also St. Gildas[1] in South Wales. This is a proof in itself that the torch of learning was kept burning in this region more than any other and South Wales was always in very close communication with Glaston. Gildas led a hermit's life on the Island of Steep Holm, as an anchorite, just opposite the mouth of the Parret, the waterway to Glaston.[2]

St. Patrick according to his own well-known "Confession or Epistle to the Irish" was not a native of Ireland. He says "my father Calpurnius was formerly a decurio, the son of Potitus, a priest who lived in the village of Banavan, belonging to Tabernia ; for he had a cottage in the neighbourhood when I was captured." He was taken by his captors, probably Orcadian pirates to the north of Ireland. Some have located St. Patrick's birthplace at Dumbarton, but, not to touch a great controversy, it may be sufficient to point out

1. "Ireland and the Celtic Church," by Professor Stokes, p. 102.
2. Caradoc of Llancarvan.

that the more completely Romanised tradition of Glamorgan and South Wales seem more applicable to the case than the Clyde. The word " Decurio " looks like a legacy from Roman military occupation at Caerleon, which would not apply to Dumbarton. A St. Decumanus who crossed the Severn Sea from South Wales and left his name to the present Parish of St. Decumans in North Somerset may suggest the same association. The place name Banavan seems like a compound of Avon and there was an Avon in the ancient land of Morganwg flowing into the Severn Sea opposite Gwyr or Gower. Here, too, were the placenames Aberafan and Talafan as well as a district called Afan.[1] " Banavan " might therefore mean head of the Avon river as Bincombe and Buncombe on the Quantock hills mean head (*Ben*) of the combe, just as it does in the Bens of Connemara. " Tabernia " reminds us of " The Three Taverns " on the Appian way from Puteoli (Acts xxviii, 15). St. Patrick (or Patricius) with a father called Calpurnius and a grandfather Potitus might surely be a Romanised Briton of Glamorgan. The change of language to which he alludes in his " Confession," from the vernacular to Latin would be illustrated nowhere more forcibly than in the " classes " and " collegia " of South Wales. When St. Patrick returned from his captivity under Milcho and escaped to a ship that helped him homewards to South Wales he must have learned much more and made himself proficient in Latin, the " lingua franca " of the old world. With regard to his first capture by Orcadian pirates if it was made in Severn waters this is not to be wondered at as Gildas tells us what an avenue for traffic these waters were—and, therefore, an attractive field for piracy.

Whatever may be said in favour of the theory that St. Patrick was born in South Wales and near Severn waters is strengthened by the persistent traditions of Glaston which claim the Saint as a resident and as a restorer of its Church and as a contributor to the fame of the great Abbey. The very proximity of the place and the unique character of its

1. *See* Warrington's " History of Wales "—Map: also Itinerary of Giraldus Cambrensis, edited by David Powell—Map. 1804.

foundation should have led St. Patrick thither. Although we must not attach too much importance to relics the "ossa Patricii" lay in its sacred tumulus, so John of Glaston wrote.

It may be noted that the Latin word "Decurio," applied to St. Patrick's father, occurs on a Roman inscription found at Malpas in Cheshire (1812) in which the Emperor Trajan confers the Roman citizenship upon a certain soldier called Reburrus,[1] who is "Decurion" of the first "ala" or wing of the Pannonians. The date is A.D. 103. We may never identify the real "Patricius" but might not his father, Calpurnius, have been a "decurio" of the Second Legion at or near Caerleon? The Roman forces were not withdrawn in his day and the date of St. Patrick's birth is said to have been 373. The saint's life is crowded with legend but when in his Confession he says he baptized one blessed Scottish virgin, Bridget, of noble race most fair, "this was one of the acts that made him really "Apostolus Scotorum." One thing seems certain that he never received his commission from Rome. Not a word is said about this in his Confession, a trustworthy autobiography. His first labours were in Ulster. Poetry and tradition have made the "Pats" and "Biddies" of Dublin very different people from their prototypes. It must be noted that the old inhabitants of Ireland were called Scoti. In King Alfred's time three Scoti came to his court from Ireland on pilgrimage.[2] The name of one of them was Macbeth.

If the Steep Holm is considered to be an Island within the bounds of Somerset and in the Parish of Brean (as, indeed, it has for centuries), then St. Gildas may be claimed as a former resident in the County (516–570?); and, further, if St. Cadoc who, according to more than one account[3] was also called St. Cungar, founding a monastery at Congresbury, it will be permissible to claim him, also, as a former resident. There can be no doubt about the antiquity of Congresbury and, with it, Banwell. King Alfred (872–901) gave both

1. "The Celt, Roman and Saxon," by Thomas Wright, p. 369.
2. Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 891.
3. *See* "Usher's Antiquities," p. 523, and "A Memorial of British Piety."

monasteries to Bishop Asser. They certainly appear as Celtic in their origin. To this day the inhabitants of Wick St. Lawrence speak of an exceptionally high tide as "David's Flood." The very geographical features of the Channel favours quick and easy passages between the two coasts of North Somerset and South Wales. The landing-places are in sight of one another and the tidal wave or "Bore" was of great assistance always in helping the primitive boats up and down the narrow creeks and estuaries according to its ebb and flow. Nature had provided an ideal meeting-place for the work of these Celtic sailor Saints. Brent Knoll was a towering observation point visible far down the Channel and Brent was said to have been given to Glaston by Rex Arturus himself.

However that may be this region must always be associated with the three great Fathers of the Celtic Church—Gildas, Cadoc and David—and we ought to add Patrick. Ireland owed much to Wales for the first and original sources of Christian truth and Christian inspiration,—far more than Wales to Ireland. Mr. J. W. Willis Bund in his "Celtic Church in Wales" pointed out how South Wales, (and he might have added North Somerset), provided for the centre and south of Ireland by the school and monastery of Clonmard whilst North Wales provided for Ulster and the north of Ireland by the school of the Irish Bangor.

By the light of this hypothesis the two islands of the Steep and Flat Holm acquire a great significance. Historically they are greater than the Islands of Arran or Macdara's Island or indeed any island off the Irish coast. The "Principium" or beginning came from Severn waters. If the monks of Glaston first set up a light-house on the Steep Holm as Louis Nedelec affirms in his "Cambria Sacra" there is more in this useful work than appears at first. Indeed, the eye of the historian wanders continually from Glaston Tor to the Steep Holm and again from the Steep Holm to Glaston, both under the mighty tutelage of St. Michael. Those tall cliffs of the Steep Holm, standing four-square to the winds of heaven figure as a kind of great "Rock of Ages" where Scripture truths were preserved and handed on and where that miracu-

lous well gave forth its waters always. Again, if Amphibalus was the spiritual father of St. Alban, England's proto-martyr, and Amphibalus was a native of Caerleon, as asserted, we come back to Severn waters as the nursery and cradle of the Christian Faith. Hence, there is, if we may so term it a kind of Apostolical succession and a conspicuous lineage of teachers.

The Holms, standing out as they do, as giant stepping-stones between the coasts of North Somerset and South Wales are, geologically speaking, outliers of the Mendip range and detached fragments of carboniferous limestone. Brean Down, Worle hill above Weston-super-Mare and St. Thomas's Head, beyond Sand Bay are all of the same material. The old British names for the Holms were Echin and Ronnett. The history of the old Priory of St. Michael on Ronnett, or Steep Holm has been sketched in the *Proceedings* of the Somerset Archæological Society (vol. LXII) and the community there founded in the reign of Richard was that of the Austin Canons. But, probably, there was a "Cella" there long before that date and the "Cella de Holm" in the Ecclesiastical Valor, *temp.* Henry VIII, seems to preserve the Celtic "Kil" or cell so common elsewhere in Ireland and Scotland. No place could have been better fitted than the Steep Holm as the abode of a Celtic saint with his "familia." There was abundance of fish to be had just for the taking: and above all solitude. "To flit across the seas," wrote old Gildas himself, "does not vex the British priests so much as it delights them." The Flat Holm was similarly suitable, where St. Cadoc sojourned, close by. In the Saxon Chronicle this island is "Bradan Relig"—"Bradan" means "broad," describing the shape of the island as contrasted with its neighbour. "Relig," in Gaelic, means a "tumulus" or graveyard.[1] Possibly "Relig" may refer to a burial-place here of Saints. This island was the refuge *c.* 1068 of Githa who fled here for safety from the Normans. Barry Island is associated with St. Baruch and the Severn rock of Tecla with an abbess of that name just as Keynsham keeps alive the name of St.

1. *See* "The Nineteenth Century and After," April, 1919, describing the life of St. Patrick.

Keyna—daughter of the Welsh Braghanus. Far down the channel "Caldey Island" may be suggestive of the Colidei or Culdees; originally named "Ynys Pur," called after a certain Pirius. Quite recently, Caldey has been the abode of a Benedictine Monastery, a very different institution from a Celtic "cell" or "classis." Formerly all these Severn islands abounded in fish and wild fowl. The Steep Holm was noted for its cod when in the possession of the Tynte family. This island boasts of a specimen of a peony, an early spring-flower that has its "habitat" nowhere else in the world. It should be consecrated to some exclusive Christian use or symbol.

It may be no idle surmise to picture, in the earliest days of British monachism, the pilgrimages and missions of Celtic Saints made in their primitive "curroghs" across the Severn waters from South Wales and the Holms. These preachers may have haunted the Parret, Glaston being always one of their bournes. From such a place as "Comwich Passage" a preacher may have travelled by the ancient road that led westward over the ridges of the Quantocks. Such a spot as the old fort at Over Stowey, still to be traced in a field name of "Castle Ground," might have been a halting-place where, indeed, a chief or local magnate might have lived. He might have welcomed the Gospel tidings and, in his "Cashel" or "Rathe," have built a primitive Christian Church inside it, perhaps the first on the Quantocks. In an old Bonvile Charter of the twelfth century this ancient Castellarium is mentioned; also the "Crogh Stokke," or palisaded hill.[1] The word "Crogh" is Gaelic and takes us far back. In Over Stowey parish there is St. David's well on the Quantocks, another on the Brendon hills at Elworthy Barrows.

These place-names may carry with them some remote and unrecorded epoch in local history, just as "St. Brides" a field on the Cannington tithe map of to-day, or St. Bride's Church near Bridgwater, now lost, conveys a meaning. At any rate, they chime in with the immemorial traditions of the Abbey of Glaston and the old-world associations of Beccaria and "Parva

1. *See* Braikenbridge MSS., Taunton Museum.

Hibernia." Between Ireland and North Somerset there must have been much intercourse—just as Harold's sons fled to Ireland when the Normans conquered England so, in another way, and, in another sense, the Celtic Christian teachers must have passed or repassed according to the stress of events.

The truth may be that when the Romans left (*c.* 410) Britain and the Saxons invaded it, being rude and rough barbarians to begin with, Christian teachers fled to Ireland down the Severn Sea as to a city of refuge. How much art and skill they took with them must be a matter more or less of conjecture, as the monuments of Christian faith displayed in crosses, and sepulchres and MSS. are much the same whether found in Ireland, Cornwall or South Wales.[1] What is popularly called Irish art together with Irish inspiration may be attributed in its real beginnings to Celts in Glamorgan or Monmouth or to men of Silurian and Dumnonian origin.

Whatever we may think of those traditions which associate St. Patrick so closely with Glaston it is certain that Glaston itself was regarded as the real "tumulus Sanctorum" more than any spot in Ireland. John of Glaston, writing in the fifteenth century, has recorded that in their flight from Ireland Irish monks brought with them the bones of St. Benignus, already mentioned as the companion of St. Patrick. Upon the resting place of the precious relics a church was built and consecrated by Bishop John de Villula in 1100. The tradition, whatever its credibility, lasted for centuries.

Apart from these traditions and others like them it may be remembered that, after the Danes had destroyed Glaston in King Alfred's time (870–880), Irish pilgrims, according to Osberne's "Life of St. Dunstan," found their way to the old monastery, so famed for the former associations with St. Patrick, and settled there. The place being destroyed the Irish monks supplemented their living by teaching the sons of the nobles, a tribute to the learning, and traditions of the spot, a "locus classicus" according to Osberne (A.D. 1090) "peregrini Patricii religiosa veneratione gloriosus," *i.e.* glorious for its veneration of St. Patrick.

1. "Monumental History of the British Church," by Romilly Allen.

The antiquity of the great Abbey of Glaston is beyond all question but in the twilight of history we should have welcomed more definite notices than we get from the pages of the first annalists. What was it like during the days of Roman occupation, for instance, when the storm of Diocletian persecutions swept over the Roman Empire (A.D. 303) and when SS. Aaron and Julius[1] were martyred at Caerleon? Did Glaston itself furnish any martyrs? Probably Gildas and Cadoc might have told us more but their pages are silent. A few trustworthy hints might have reduced the fanciful accounts of Geoffrey of Monmouth to their proper proportions and told us more about the real kings and "tyranni" of the Severn Sea, and more about the real or mythical King Arthur, the centre of Dumnonian and Glaston traditions. Perhaps the dumb evidence of roads and place-names and the use of language and local definitions, generally, may shed a cresset light upon dark places. Can we call up Caerleon or Caerwent as they were or picture again its traffic, trade and mode of life just when the first glimmer of Christianity came? or at any date up to A.D. 400?

Quite recently Mr. Morland of the town of Glastonbury has traced an ancient road, presumably Roman, that crossed the Brue, close to Glaston and led to Street (*via* Strata) and the Polden ridge. Just here was the "Pons periculosus," mentioned by Leland the antiquary (A.D. 1538), as a "bridge of stone of 4 arches commonly called Pontperlus wher men fable that Artur cast in his sword." Whatever we think of the flashing sword the Roman road here seems to be a reality and the continuation of it is undoubtedly along Polden ridge. It is proposed to show in a subsequent chapter how this Roman road was linked up with other lines of communication by the Parret and Severn water-ways.

Apart from Greek ecclesiastical words, such as church, bishop, priests and deacons which appear to have reached furthest Britain through the medium of the Gallican Church; and apart, also, from the Roman secular words indicative of early Imperial occupation such as caer or castrum and others

1. Britannia Sancta.

(to which allusion has already been made), there was a "stratum" of monastic words that point to direct transference from Latin use. So far as their evidence goes they prove the concurrent existence of Christianity in Roman Britain before the Roman generals left the country. Such a word as "cella" itself, representative of the numerous "kils" in early days of Celtic monasticism, might have been adopted at any date in the first three or four centuries. The word "carcer" or "carceir," meaning a prison or immured abode is another word. So too is the word "flamens," and also the words "sacerdos" and "praesul." These and others like them were taken over probably from daily Roman or Romano-British use and did not come through the medium of Gaul. "Familia" and the word "praedicator" may be added. They followed naturally from first conversions. The first anchorites were said to have put themselves in a "prison." It is possible also that Dumnonia existed according to the Romano-British Ptolemaic definition and was a real quasi Romano-British kingdom.

In 601 we read that a "Rex Dumnoniae" gave the land which was called "Ynys Witrin," *i.e.* Insula Avalonia or Glaston to the Abbot there, named Worgrez (Spelman's *Concilia*). Who the King of Dumnonia was, William of Malmesbury, (A.D. 1090), himself a Glaston monk and writing the "Gesta Regum Anglorum," does not know, as the antiquity and, we suppose, the illegibility of the Charter prevented it. Still the Rex was a Rex Britannicus because Glaston was called "Ynys Witrin," the old Celtic name. Dr. Edwin Guest has surmised in the "Archaeologia Cambrensis" that this king was a certain "Gurgantus Magnus," a Prince of great power on both sides of the Severn sea, *i.e.* in Glamorgan and Monmouth as well as Somerset. In this case Dumnonia and Demetia would have a kind of common overlord or suzerain. This geographical definition of both Dumnonia and Demetia would throw light upon the meaning of these geographical terms long afterwards in King Alfred's and Asser's time and partially explain the Danish campaign of 878, where both definitions occur, as already noted.

In the well-known Exeter version of Domesday under the

heading of " Terra Abbatis Glaston : in Devenesira " there appear such Polden Manors east of the Parret as Shapwick, Cossington, Chilton Polden and Edington as well as Middlezoy. It is difficult to account for their classification. It looks like going back to the days of that " Rex Dumnoniae " who gave " Ynys Witrin " to Worgrez. The Exon Domesday list seems to place Polden Manors in a region which even in 1086 was reckoned to lie in Devon or Dumnonia. It differs from the usual list.

Dumnonia may have meant a kind of Celtic realm, lost to view as an historic entity, but living as a kind of spiritual influence from St. Michael's Tor at Glaston to St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall. Earthly kings had departed : bishops reigned in new places ; but the glamour, power and original influences of the Abbots of Glaston remained. No wonder the erstwhile rivalry even in Norman times between the Abbot of Glaston and the newer Bishops of Bath and Wells.

The fame of the great monastery of Glaston ran through the whole of Dumnonia and further still. By derivation Glaston means the " ton " (Saxon) of the Monastic " Classis," the Latin word, probably taken over direct from the Romans when they occupied Britain. " Classes " was the name given to an important and responsible body in the Welsh or Celtic Church. Professor Lloyd in his recent history of Wales[1] has pointed out that in Brycheiniog or Brecon, (the kingdom of Brychan), there existed the " Y clas ar Wy," the " clas " or monastery on the Wye, which the English call " Glasbury," a term closely resembling Glastonbury. Amongst the Cambro-British Saints there was Sanctus Kenider de Glasbury. Also, in Rhysyfarch's " Life of St. David " mention is there made of the " monastica classis " of Clas Garmon and Clas Bangor, i.e. a collegium of saintly men. The " Claswyr " is alluded to as an institution in the Welsh Church by Giraldus Cambrensis (1180–1200), styled " Canons." Professor Lloyd[2] remarks how important and responsible a body the Claswyr was, receiving half the payments made to the Church, suc-

1. Vol. i, p. 272.
2. Vol. i, p. 205.

ceeding to the moveable property of the abbot, when he died, and deciding finally all disputes amongst the members of the "classis." The Abbot of Llancarvan rules thirty-six canons with an organization essentially the same as that of the Cathedral Church of Llandaff, the place of the abbot being taken by the bishop; a priest of Teilo representing the later dean and twenty-four canons forming the "clas." The old Church of St. Woolos was served by a clas.[1]

Accepting the "classis" or "clas" as a genuine term we see how widely it spread not only in Wales but in Ireland and Scotland and the Isles. From Usher's "Antiquities" we learn that Colman was abbot of Tir (terra) da glas. In Scotland there was the notable Sedes Glascuenses or Glasgow occupied by St. Kentigern in A.D. 610: Arkinglass was near Loch Fyne: Dunmaglass near Inverness: Glasterberry near Aberdeen. In Ireland there was Finglas, a little village three miles north of Dublin, the site of an ancient abbey ascribed to St. Cainnech; Glascarrig was on the east coast of Wexford, near Cahore Point; Baltinglas at Lismore in Waterford; Ardglas above Carlingford where stood Jordan's Castle[2] with a mote on the Ward of Ardglas; Glas Kynnic was Kilkenny, the "Kil" meaning the "cell," a monastic word traceable in numerous places in Ireland and Scotland.

In Wales again we may note Glaslyn on the Usk and Glasfryn in Carnarvonshire; Porthclas, Parkclas, Morienclas in Pembroke; Glascarey on Caldey Island.[3] In Cornwall old William of Worcester notes in his Itinery near Falmouth "locus Collegii in Penrhyn, Glasneth in Lingua Cornubiae," *anglice* Polsethow. Last but not least in its significance we read that Columkille went to Glasinoiden, *i.e.* Glasneven, near Dublin, and found fifty persons in that "classis," amongst them Cainnech, Ciaran and Comgall.[4]

It may be noted that in 1646–1660, during the Common-

1. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. lvii, pt. ii, p. 114.

2. "Ireland under the Normans," by G. H. Orpen. Clarendon Press, 1911.

3. "St. Dogmael's Abbey," by E. Pritchard.

4. Skene, vol. ii, p. 480.

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RUINS OF THE GREAT CHURCH—LOOKING WEST.

ABBOT WHITING'S KITCHEN ON THE SOUTH.

wealth the word "classis" was revived consciously or unconsciously by the Reformers of that day and that Somerset was divided into nine classes, *i.e.* at Bath, Wrington, Wells, Bruton, Ilchester, Ilminster, Taunton, Bridgwater and Dunster.[1] But of course this use and application of the word "classis" was completely different from the Welsh or Celtic example.

Amongst all ancient classes Glaston and the "insula Avalonia" ruled supreme, as the moon amongst the lesser luminaries of Heaven. Here was the "Delos" around which the other islands and stations might be said to revolve. That sacred enclosure of sixty acres, round which the Hagieta (hedge or wall) ran, was inviolate and inviolable. When heathen Danes ventured inside, in Canute's time, rumour said that they were struck with blindness. More wonderful still, perhaps, in later times, when Edward I and his Queen once sojourned there at Easter the test was made that the king's own visit even in the king's own person, could and did not run inside the sacred twelve hides. Aloft on the Tor rose the Chapel of St. Michael typifying the unseen presence and power of the Almighty. Not without some reason did Bishop Savaric lay claim to the title of Bishop of Glaston and on his Pastoral Staff cause to be wrought the figure of St. Michael subduing the dragon (1192–1205), copied in the present Pastoral Staff of the Bishop of Bath and Wells.

In modern phraseology we might liken Glaston to a Celtic power station, a wonderful illuminant, sending its rays broadcast over sea and land.

1. "The Church under the Commonwealth," by W. A. Shaw, vol. ii.

Chapter III.

St. Michael.

HE true Patronal Saint of the Valley of the Parret and the Brue was, in ancient times, St. Michael. Indeed, his sway extended far westward and William of Worcester (1414–1432), together with St. Michael on Glaston Tor, St. Michael of Montacute and St. Michael's Borough at Athelney, enumerates St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall, St. Michael de Rock, five miles from Bodmin, and St. Michael Rowton, near Camelford, and St. Michael de Brenton, two miles beyond Tavistock.

In Dr. Archer's account of "Religious Houses in Somerset" (1729), we read how the Abbey and Convent of St. Michael "in periculo maris" in Normandy, to which the Priory of St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall was a cell, received a yearly pension of xl marks from the parsonage of Martock.[1] By sea St. Michael was to the wandering Celtic sailor a tutelary saint in an especial sense. To him the thought of the Archangel was omnipresent and, far above the sea mists of rocky headlands, the chapel oftentimes of St. Michael was visible on a consecrated hill, not a chapel adapted so much to congregational purposes, (as indeed, we might gather from the very position), but a symbol of worship and a sign of protection. To it the struggling mariner could turn a supplicating eye and address a prayer for help and relief.

> "Eternal Father, strong to save,
> Whose Arm hath bound the restless wave."

True, it was an unseen Presence, but the Throne itself of

1. Wells MSS., vol. i, p. 449. Hist. MSS. C., 1907.

the Almighty was invisible. Therefrom all power emanated. Behind the belief and the Invocation lay the Christian revelation and the Christian's faith.

It is interesting to trace these early dedications to St. Michael wherever they are, as they indicate a very marked feature of Celtic belief—not only in "Ancient Dumnonia," but further afield, wherever boats and coracles could float in open seas or narrow tidal estuaries.

If an idea of fatherly power and protection permeated the mind of the Celtic mariner it also possessed the soul of the anchorite. Of the Skellig Michael, off the coast of Kerry, it has been said that it was just such a solitude as this to which Columba retired when he wished to commune with God alone. Surrounded by a vast waste of sea, disturbed by no sound save the cry of the sea fowl and the roar of the broken waves, the early Celtic saints perfected a life of self-denial beneath the Archangel's wing. The sea gave them fish and food: a spring of water, (often a miraculous spring on an island), water to drink, and the rest of their simple wants was supplied by the animals which, whether wild or domesticated, browsed on the scanty herbage of wind-swept shores. Trained in this way these saints went forth as missionaries to spread the light of Christianity throughout Europe in the seventh and eighth centuries, as Romilly Allen points out in his "Monumental History of the Church" (p. 50). In King Alfred's reign the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle gives us this entry (already quoted), proving the evangelising zeal of Celtic missionaries in A.D. 891. "And three Scots came to King Alfred in a boat without any oars from Ireland, whence they had stolen away because they desired for the love of God to be in a state of pilgrimage, they recked not where. The boat in which they came was made of 2½ hides and they took with them provisions for seven days: and then about the seventh day they came on shore in Cornwall and soon after went to King Alfred. Thus were they named: Dubslane, and Macbeth and Maclimnan." By a "pilgrimage" in those days a "mission" is probably meant.

Too little has been said or noticed about this unique passage in the A. S. Chronicle which reveals as by a single flash-light

the trend and nature of Celtic religious zeal. It needed no college "De Propaganda Fide" to send these Scots on their errand. It was the same motive that sent St. Winfred (Boniface 630–755) amongst the Frisians and the Germans. But, to begin with, Boniface received his missionary inspiration from an English cradle, whether by the banks of the Exe or the Axe, (as some contend), or, indeed, at Nursling near Winchester. But he was captured by Rome and Gregory II seized this promising instrument and re-consecrated him, and, indeed, all like him, to the Papal Service, by most stringent oaths of obedience. So Boniface went forth an Anglo-Saxon in zeal but a Roman in policy. It made no difference whether the missionary was Anglo-Saxon like Winfred and Willibrand, or Celtic like Columbanus or Aidan. In both races, especially the Celtic, there was a spirit of daring enterprise and adventure by sea. The purely Latin missionary lacked this. Bede has described the whole-hearted work of Aidan, how he travelled on foot not on horseback; how he turned aside to speak to all, whether rich or poor; how he called them to the rite of Baptism; how he behaved with the utmost humility and moderation; how he spent his time in prayer and fasting; how he journeyed on his apostolic tours without pause or rest. The example of St. Paul was ever before him.

The call of the Celtic Churches was oecumenical in its way, recognising no known boundaries of time or place. The whole world was their mission-field and they laboured like a modern missionary might labour in Polynesia. Their methods were simple, founded exactly on the example of Holy Writ. Twelve apostles went forth under a leader, just as at sacred Glaston, where the old local definition of the "Twelve Hides" still exists as a monument to that early zeal. Churches and chapels grew up round the centre and the "Seven Sisters of Polden Hill" still attest to the missionary zeal that extended the spiritual sphere of Glaston. The great Archangel made his presence felt everywhere by sea and land.

Great and deep conceptions underlay the St. Michael dedications, as deep as human nature could fathom. To invoke the Archangel's name and to seek his protection meant the

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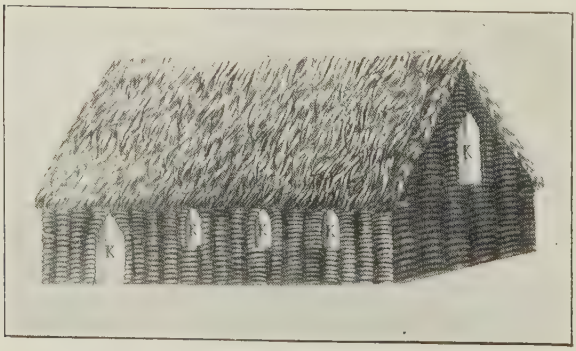
ST. MICHAEL'S TOWER, GLASTONBURY.



THE EARLIEST CHURCH AT GLASTONBURY,

SEE SPELMAN'S "CONCILIA."

acknowledgment of all the great truths that Christianity itself postulated and Holy Writ taught. There was the never-ending contest between good and evil, between right and wrong, justice and injustice. The Archangel was in the fore-front of the battle. He stands as the protagonist executing the Will of the Almighty. He is represented as a warrior clad in armour, the wielder of a spear and as the slayer of the "Dragon." He is something more than the avenger of evil, when, as on the church towers of Glaston and Minehead he holds the scales. On the Glaston tower the Bible is in one of the scales prevailing against devils who are trying to over-balance it, much to their discomfiture.[1] St. Michael is the calm assessor of revealed truth and of the power of the Word. Everything hangs and depends on this. Should the Bible prevail or should it not ? To say that the appeal to St. Michael meant only a human cry to some Dagon or to some magical influence, no better than a barbaric cult in groves, is to take not only a shallow but an absolutely unjustified view. If St. Michael was the sea-farer's tutelary saint he stood in his own person for a whole body of beliefs and for a whole armoury of Truth. He was the eternal symbol of Righteousness and, whether the clash was that of ungovernable elements, or the discord of human passions raging in the World, his figure stood above and beyond the tumultuous gathering of random forces, the unchanging image of celestial attributes. He prefigured the presence, the power, the justice and the all-pervading protection of the Almighty. This surely was the belief of the Celtic churches in their earliest and wider stages as a missionary church, but not the belief of the Latin church. The fundamental idea of the Papacy involving an Infallible Head and a visible "Vicegerent of God" upon earth conflicts with the belief in that unseen and spiritual power symbolised by St. Michael the Archangel. But here we are upon the fringe of a great and deep question. It is sufficient to note here how real and how powerful was this spiritual belief in the minds of the Celtic peoples and Celtic sea-farers.

Some have objected to the whole working of a Celtic church

1. Collinson's "History of Somersetshire," Vol. ii, p. 265.

and a Celtic form of religious government as too limited and too "tribal." This charge is partly true and partly misleading. Certainly church government by bishops, archdeacons and rural deans was not brought to a systematic perfection, as Skene points out in his history of the Scotch church. But the missionary zeal of the Celtic church in and around the Severn Sea took the first propagandists far beyond their "Tribe." Glaston was a radiating centre—no one looked upon Glaston in the light of a mere tribe or of a small Monastic Colony. The appeal was "ad mundum." Herein also lay an important difference between Glaston on the one hand and any monastery in Ireland, Scotland or elsewhere. Glasgow, for instance, could never be the same as Glaston. Even the honours of Iona were secondary to Ynys Witrin and, neither in Wales or Ireland, was there any "collegium" or "clas" to rival it. Glaston was a mausoleum of kings, a cemetery for saints as well as the first Christian chapel, sacred to St. Michael. It became merged in the Latin system but not of its own free will. It had a system and influence of its own. Asser of Menevia might have been Abbot of Glaston in King Alfred's time if the Danes had not utterly destroyed it. Its fame endured for centuries so that Bishop Savaric called himself "Bishop of Glastonbury," as well as Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1192–1205.

From another point of view and one founded on history, Bishop Asser, when called upon by King Alfred to rule in Wessex and in the counties of Devon, Somerset and Cornwall, did not refuse the great task, although it went far beyond the limits of South Wales and of the existing Welsh church. Here, also, the call was of the oecumenical order. When King Alfred needed help he in his turn looked not to Rome but to the Celtic churchmen.

How different the founding of a Benedictine Monastery! or of an alien priory founded by Norman Conquerors. There was a world of opposite intentions. Stoke Courcy Priory was an alien priory attached to Lonley in Normandy and the object of it was to exalt the piety of the Norman Conquerors and possibly to atone for their misdeeds in life. Both Stoke Courcy and the parish of Wootton Courtney had to sustain

French monks and to contribute to their "corrodies," not for the sake of religion but to help rivet the chains of the Norman Conquerors. The same thing was done when Goldcliff in Monmouthshire was founded as an alien priory, attached to Bec in Normandy, by the De Candos family who gave Nether Stowey and Monksilver (Monachorum silva) as an endowment. This can hardly be called "evangelisation" and when chantries and small "collegia" as at Kilve, with five singing priests were founded to pray for the souls of the Furneaux family or when a similar institution arose at Stoke-sub-Hamdon to pray for the souls of the Beauchamp families; this, too, can hardly be called evangelisation. Religion was invoked to strengthen a worldly conqueror's arm and to perpetuate his name by payment of fees. In the case of the Normans, the Pope of Rome had blessed the invasion of England and sanctioned King William's enterprise. Surely the Celtic missionaries of the Celtic church, using the term in its widest sense, were nearer the spirit of the first evangelists. The Norman or Latin church was more like "a tribal" church when it sanctioned a chantry for a clan or single family.

Again, when Woodspring or Worspring Priory was founded by William Courtenay, descended from William de Tracy and allied to the other murderers of Thomas à Becket the motive of the foundation was simply and entirely the desire to make expiation for a turbulent priest who interfered in high politics. Also, there was the wish to bow down to Papal authority and to make amends for a deed, which inexcusable in itself, gathered odium chiefly because it flouted the rule and jurisdiction of the Papal chair. Thus a religious institution sprang into being on the shores of the Severn Sea; but could its object ever have been Christian evangelisation by any stretch of imagination. Nay, to put it plainly, it was founded to save founders kin from a curse. "St. Thomas Head" was the name given to the well known promontory jutting out into Severn waters, close to Worspring, but could that name have meant to the sailor of those waters all that, for example, St. Michael's Priory meant on Steep Holm to Celtic sailors as they found their way up Channel.

Again, was it in consequence of some mere tribal call that

the name of Carantacus was left at Crantock in Cornwall and, so it is said, at Carhampton in Somerset ? that the name of Dubritius was linked with Porlock ; St. Decumanus with St. Decumans, St. Columbanus with Culbone and an ancient chapel of St. Columban on Mendip,[1] that St. Keyna left her name to Keynsham ; St. Bridget to St. Bride's, a field in Cannington,[2] and to that ancient Church of St. Bride's at Bridgwater, now lost : that St. Nectanus was remembered at Hartland and also near Cheddar ; St. Brendan at Bristol, and so on to an indefinite degree in Cornwall, Ireland and Wales. The missionary chapter of the Celtic church stands by itself as a great revelation. Not by the will of man, or of tribal chiefs or, indeed, as apostolic delegates sent by the " Sacred Congregation " of the Propaganda " did the first Christian missionaries sally forth. There was something miraculous in their adventures and in the spirit that prompted them.

The early Celtic missionaries represented in themselves more truly the real sources of simple inspiration. The message for them was not confused with worldly politics nor were they hampered at every turn by canonical rules or ecclesiastical laws. Canons and councils alike were to them unknown and if they flung themselves upon their task as individual enthusiasts in journeys and travels and in perils of the deep they were but following the example of St. Paul. They held in their hands the words of the Gospel only.

In later times the place of St. Michael was taken by the Virgin Mary as in the seaside chapel dedicated to her at Old Cleeve near Minehead. This shrine was frequented by pilgrims and hallowed by the offerings of devout travellers but it will easily be seen how a pilgrimage to this chapel aroused far different feelings of religion and devotion. On the tower of Minehead Church, where St. Michael holds the scales, the Virgin Mary takes the place of the Bible, as represented on the Glastonbury tower, as a make weight against the evil influences of Satan, the author of all evil on earth. There was a profound difference in the thought and invocation.

1. Wells MSS.
2. Tithe Map.

The one belongs to a very early age of Christian evangelisation; the other to the gradual development in the Roman Church of Mariolatry. The Virgin is made to take the place of the Bible, and this is what the symbolism on Minehead tower implies with the rosary hung under the figure.

How lasting the invocation to St. Michael really was may be inferred from the runic inscriptions on the monuments of the churches of Bornholm in the island of Gottland although as far as antiquity goes, the invocation at Glaston was older than any others. In Gottland, where the inscriptions on the sepulchres were "God help his Soul and also St. Michael," the role of the Archangel, the great spiritual assessor, seems almost to be that of an intercessor. For his place the Roman Church substituted the concrete image of the Virgin.

In the distant Mediterranean and not far from the romantic shores of the Riviera and Cannes a story of Celtic evangelisation was enacted at Les Iles de Lerina in the early centuries. These islands have been termed the "Iona of the South." About A.D. 350 Honoratus, born in Northern Gaul, a man of rank and position it is said, became a Christian, and to avoid persecution as well as to gain the peace his soul required, travelled south and settled at Lerina. In many respects he was like the Saints of the Severn Sea, such as Gildas, St. Cadoc and the rest. Miracles were recounted of him as of St. Decumans, for example, that he was wafted across the sea on a cloak. Lerina and St. Victor of Marseilles were the two first monasteries in Southern Gaul. Lerina was governed by a native of Britain called Faustus and was associated with Benedict Biscop the instructor of the Venerable Bede at Jarrow. St. Honoratus was Bishop of Arles in which he was succeeded by Caesarius. Columbanus of Luxueil was known at this famous island monastery. From Iona in the north to the Les Iles de Lerins in the Mediterranean both the preaching and teaching of British Sailor Saints prevailed. This teaching was not confined to any particular region, Kingdom or Principalities. It spread far and wide like the winds and currents of the ocean itself.

St. Michael was invoked everywhere and the Priory of St. Michael at Carnonlis close to Cap Martin at Mentone was a

Priory belonging to the monastery at Lerina. The sweep of the Archangel's wing was wide like that of the albatross and covered leagues of ocean waste not pausing apparently to hover too long over one particular country. No favoured eye saw too long the silent poising backwards and forwards of the pinions. The message carried was truly oecumenical. Some have said that the Celtic Church and the Celtic sailor saints meant uncemented mission. Perhaps in this fact lay some of this church's strength. Its spiritual nature, as propounded by the first preachers, was never impeached and if it failed in all borrowed apparatus of an earthly Kingdom and Empire, was this failure to count against it? In the "Encomiums of Theodosius" St. Michael is incorporeal; "a spirit and not Flesh"; "the Vicegerent of God who is a Spirit." He is over all the hosts of Heaven and over everything according to the Commandment of God. He represents the spiritual Kingdom and all its working upon earth—chief of the ministering angels.[1]

Sir John Rhys in his "Arthurian Legend" (pp. 341–2) surely misinterprets the office of St. Michael, as the Celtic Church viewed it when he wrote "Above all the Archangel Michael played the part of a kind of Psycho-pompus" (whatever is meant by this) "for Christendom. For as Gwyn at Nud, King of Hades, with his hell-hounds hunted disembodied souls, so Michael with his angels undertook to save them. He is made to be present to separate the good from the bad when the souls are being weighed in the scales, and he is pictured especially as engaged in keeping in check the wiles of the elves." These elves peopled the shades of night, the gloom of the forest and even the straggling mists on the tops of the hills. With all due respect to Sir John Rhys it must be said that St. Michael meant more than this.

The Virgin in dedication takes the place of St. Michael, as at Nether Stowey where St. Michael's chapel on Castle Hill was supplanted by St. Mary's Church near Stowey Court. Learned Welsh philologist as Sir J. Rhys is, he seems to miss

1. St. Michael the Archangel. Three Encomiums. Edited by E. A. Wallis Budge, Litt.D.

the meaning of the Welsh and Celtic spirit. He does not satisfy us as an interpreter of distant days or of distant thoughts. Nor does he clearly correlate his great knowledge of particulars. He is surely wrong in saying that Somerset meant the "Land of Summer" (p. 241), a trifling error, no doubt, but enough for us to question his conclusions.

There were no waters more famous for churches dedicated to St. Michael than Severn waters. It was not surely upon a vain errand that as far back as A.D. 180 St. Faganus, who if immemorial tradition is true, (backed up by the real existence of a place-name in Glamorgan), crossed the Severn Sea and with Diruvianus erected a chapel and oratory on the Isle of Glaston in honour of St. Michael. In Glamorgan itself there were no less than four Welsh towns bearing the name of St. Michael and, indeed, throughout South Wales whole groups of churches were built in his honour. In the Diocese of St. David there were no less than forty-five dedications. On the North Somerset coast the sailors of "Ancient Dumnonia" would see as they came up the Channel the church or, perhaps, in early days, the Chapel of St. Michael on Minehead North Hill, close to the place where an old beacon sent forth its flame in days of war's alarms. At the "Botestall," the old Saxon name for the station or "stall of the boats," he might have seen the little seaside Chapel of St. Michael at Stolford, now barely existing in rumour and once the chapel belonging to the Earls of Northumberland, when they were lords of Stoke Courcy.[1] Further up the channel, there used to be an ancient Chapel to St. Michael at Congresbury, the hermitage of St. Congar, A.D. 711, also called St. Docunus (Capgrave). This chapel lasted till 1548 when it was described as "The Chapell of Saincte Michael situate within the Church Yard now in decaye."[2] From the mouth of the river Parrett the tall eminence of Brent Knoll is conspicuous far down the channel and on its slope is the church dedicated to St. Michael: at Puriton or "Pereton," (the old Domesday "town" of the Parret), where from time immemorial there was an an-

1. Rev. W. Greswell's "The Land of Quantock," p. 94.
2. Som. Record Society, vol. ii p. 75.

chorage at Downend, on the way to Polden and Glaston there sprung up another Church to St. Michael, and, close by, at Bawdrip there was a similar dedication. Creech (Cricca and Creek) St. Michael, carries its own story with it. The origin of the old Priory of St. Michael on the island of Steep Holm is unknown, but it is not an unreasonable surmise to suppose that the Glaston monks first founded it, so that all sailors " in periculo maris " might be comforted. A tradition has been handed down by Louis Nedelec, author of " Cambria Sancta," that the monks of Glaston built or constructed some primitive light-house here to guide the boats that must so often have crossed from Weston, Uphill and many other anchorages to South Wales. Such a light may really be looked upon as symbolical of that wider spiritual light and illumination which, century after century, was diffused from Joseph of Arimathea's " wattled cell." In Wales the Skyvidd-vawr or Great Skyvidd, an isolated hill to the north of Abergavenny, skirted by the Usk at its feet and clearly distinguishable from Brent Knoll in favourable weather, was called St. Michael's or " The Holy Mountain."

Glaston and St. Michael's Tor, with its great prestige and rich endowments, spreading through Ancient Dumnonia, from Falmouth and the " Insula St. Michaelis de Lamman " to remote posts in Severn waters and all parts of South Wales, came to be in the eyes of its votaries far greater than any " Bishop's Settle " with limited boundaries. Both in its riverine and even transpontine character it rallied hosts to its call and gave a kind of spiritual cement to a *congeries* of widely separated clans and Septs. " Glastonia illuminatio mea." (to apply the old Oxford motto), might well have been the boast of generations. Nor, if the long annals of Glaston are carefully followed, were its monks backward in all that learning and enthusiasm which produced so many abbots, bishops and archbishops. It was a school of learning as well as a burying place of kings.

It must not be forgotten that the ancient Celtic monasteries, dedicated as they were to St. Michael, and the seats of militant Christianity, were also repositaries of learning. It was not bare impulse alone that always inspired missionary

effort for the lamp of learning was handed on from one generation to another. The Sword of the Spirit and the tongues of Angels were behind the great figure that personified Right. There is surely a Miltonic interpretation of the everlasting War in Heaven, which Sir J. Rhys missed.

The Library and Scriptorium of a Monastery are always an index of the value attached to a proper education and at Lerina was a large and valuable one, where grammar, rhetoric and logic were taught. Here, it is said, the parents of the higher classes sent their sons for education, and here, too, John Cassian, the Bishop of Marseilles, the founder of two celebrated monasteries, one for men and one for women, resorted. Caesarius, also, a monk at Lerina in 480, and Bishop of Arles in 502, for half a century was accounted the most distinguished man in the Church of Southern Gaul, a reformer in the rules he introduced for the ordering of the Monastic life, and for preaching. Guizot has praised his sermons, still extant, as eloquent expositions of Divine Truths. The Monastery of Lerina always furnished many learned bishops to the Churches of Gaul, as Montalembert notes. Nostradamus (d. 1566) said that the Library was the most beautiful in all Europe, although little was left after the plunderings and burnings of pirates and Saracens, a fate that overtook so many of our own Monastic libraries in the days of the heathen Danes.

The Library of old Glaston has long been lost and destroyed, although, in the catastrophe of the sixteenth century, we might have hoped that it would be preserved as a national monument replete with the wisdom of ages. But hints here and there are given of its nature. Amongst the relics enumerated by Glaston annalists as jealously guarded by the old abbey were the "Ossa Caesarii," *i.e.* the bones of Caesarius, the above-mentioned monk of the "Isles des Lerins" and Bishop of Arles? In the library was the "Regula Caesarii," whose institutes relating to the order of Coenobites" must have been known both at Glaston and the Isles des Lerins (A.D. 410–432). There were also several relics of S. Basil the Great of Caesarea (A.D. 329–379) who introduced into the Western Churches the antiphonal method of chaunting the

Psalms. He was the chief organiser of the Monastic Communities of Eastern Christendom, his rule being based upon the Rule of St. Anthony and of Macarius and not upon the usages of Rome in any way. St. Basil is said to have inspired the genius of Hooker and to have called forth the admiration of Gibbon. Dean Milman also said of St. Basil that his opinion concerning the monastic life was far more moderate and practical than those of the extreme hermits and solitaries. The influences of the Eastern Church seems to have filtered through to Britain by way of the Church of Southern Gaul and Marseilles, such teachers as St. Basil and Caesarius explaining and reducing to rule the enthusiasm and zeal of the first anchorites. This teaching preceded that of St. Benedict of Nursia.

Glaston was intimately in touch with the Church of Northern Gaul. Its connection was symbolized not only by "Martinsei," *i.e.* St. Martin's Island Church, but also by the care it guarded the relics of St. Martin himself; also those of his great master St. Hilary of Arles, that great and formerly independent see. The relics of St. Samson, Archbishop of Dol marked a link between St. David's and Dol—at both of which places St. Iltutus of South Wales was well known. These points of contact are capable of illustration in many ways and have been enlarged upon by the writer in his chapters on the "Early History of Glaston." The connection is more striking when it is considered with reference to the times before St. Dunstan and the period of Benedictine rule. The old Celtic ideals suffered an eclipse. Their teaching was ignored and their discipline despised. St. Michael certainly reigned long over the Historic Tor, but then behind the figure of St. Michael holding the scales of Divine Justice, unaltered, unalterable, with the Bible as a make-weight, there sprang up by human invention, that human figure sitting by the doubtful decisions of mere mortal judges as "The vicegerent of God upon Earth," holding the scales. The Pope of Rome took the place of St. Michael the Archangel: the fleshly form the place of the Invisible Spirit.

Our ancient churches convey the teaching of St. Michael by the earliest symbols and both doctrine and symbolism

went together explaining one another. Both belong to a very early period. At Othery, so close to Athelney, in one of the niches of the tower, he is striking down a dragon.[1] At Ilchester old Leland noted that a chapel to his honour was one of the oldest relics of the tower. At Sherborne, too, he saw a Chapel of St. Michael "Now clean down." But the story of the teaching of the great Archangel lingered on in church screens and bench ends, as at Norton Fitzwarren, Old Cleeve, Crowcombe and many another parish. The eternal allegory of the destruction of evil by good remained in wood and stone. Surely it was that thought that prompted the erection of St. Michael's Chapel close to Athelney, the last refuge of the great Alfred at the most thrilling and crucial period of his life.[2]

Celtic Hagiology is extensive, as we may guess from the example of Cornwall, where Saints and Saint dedications abound. But these were not "invocation" Saints, such as those against which the Elizabethan Homilist inveighed in his "Perils of Idolatry," every trade and profession having an especial patron; scholars calling upon St. Gregory, doctors upon St. Cornelius for the "falling evil," even hunters called upon Hubert, horse-leeches upon St. Loy, and swineherds upon St. Anthony, etc. all as "Dei medioximi," *i.e.* intercessors. When Celtic dedications were given they would seem to be for remembrance and example, a better example of the "Communion of Saints." Such Saints were St. Neot and St. Guerir in Cornwall, the latter with a wayside shrine at which we are told the great Alfred worshipped when hunting. Such a "Semita Sanctorum" would lie in retired places, and there was no Capgrave to record "legenda," no "Bollandists" to enlarge upon them. Irish "Hagiology" is another study, as those may know who have visited St. Macdara's Island, and

1. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. xliii, p. 45.

2. It may be added that wells were dedicated to St Michael, as at Minehead, near the church (see Hancock's "Minehead," p. 130); also at Cannington. At South Petherton a bronze seal was discovered with the figure of St. Michael treading on the Dragon. At Stanton, Dunster, an ancient "cell" or "kil" has been located on the supposed site of a chapel to St. Michael. In the parish of Old Cleeve the legend of the dragon survives.

have listened to native rumour and heard how the roofed cell arose in a single night and how the Saint himself sojourned there. Beliefs and oral traditions (picturesque enough in their way) have floated down through centuries.

But whether off the stormy coasts of Connemara or along the shores of Bardsey Island, near Cardigan Bay, the refuge finally of St. Dubricius (612) and of many Culdee recluses; or, again, along the promontories and bays of Cornwall, or in the more peaceful waters of the Severn Sea, we feel that we are present at the romantic birth-places of Christianity, the rock-fashioned cradle of a new nativity. The preachers and teachers sleep their last long sleep with the requiem of the waves around them, and their names live here and there in hamlet and village. The spot they first hallowed lay beneath some echoing cliff or beneath some rustling tree guarding an unsullied spring of water, with a summons to worship no louder than a tinkling hand-bell, such as the black bell of St, Patrick and the bell of St· Adamnan or the bell of St. Madoc. Truly, an infant Church. But like the human infant of Wordsworth it may have trailed at its birth some great celestial glory. Aloft St. Michael sheltered it with his broad wings.

Chapter IV.

Athelney Abbey.

FROM its antiquity and also for the reason of its first foundation, Athelney Abbey, even in its utter decay and loneliness, should be a subject of supreme interest, not only to the local antiquary, but also to that wider circle of patriotic historians who desire to trace the memories of the past and to link them in thought with the present. We connect Westminster Abbey, first and foremost, with the shrine of Edward the Confessor: Battle Abbey with the brave Harold; Athelney, in its turn, we must associate with King Alfred, the greatest and wisest of kings. Here, according to his design, was to rise amidst the marshes of North Petherton, a Thanksgiving Abbey, which, handed down as a National Memorial, should keep in mind for ever the greatest deliverance England had yet known in her annals. True it is that the foundation now dates back more than 1000 years (since A.D. 878), but, even after all these centuries, the unspeakable horrors of those times before the rescue came, must oppress the thoughts of the reflective annalist.

What if a chance thrust from a Viking's spear had laid King Alfred low, whether in the forefront of the battle, or when engaged in a stealthy reconnaissance as a "Master Scout" within the enemy's lines, harp in hand! What if that last refuge on the Marsh Island had been forced and Guthrum, the unconverted heathen, had swept through Mid Somerset and held the utmost limits of the West! What if the few still glimmering lamps of Christianity had been extinguished! and few, indeed, they were at one time! What would the Vikings have done with their conquest? One thing

is clear and it is that the fortunes of England would have been turned into another and, to us, unknown channel. Christianity may in time have re-asserted itself and salvation come from some hitherto unconjectured quarter. But there would have been no " Peace of Wedmore," no baptismal font at Aller ! No settlement of Danes and English side by side as Christian folk in a Christian State.

Unlike the surroundings of a peaceful Cistercian Abbey, such as that of Old Cleeve at West Somerset at this day, there is no appeal of masonry or of ancient buildings at Athelney. It is a pity that such does not exist and that the sham modern church or building on " St. Michael's Borough " or " Borough Mump " is the only monument (if it is a monument), that meets the eye. Yet surely here is the chance for a modern Beckford, with accumulated capital, to erect a suitable landmark more appropriate in its site than Sir Richard Colt Hoare's monument at Stourton. Or, indeed, St. Michael's Borough might be crowned with a " County " or " National " Memorial to emphasize anew a nation's thanksgiving for an escape, after a thousand years, from the hands of modern Huns, somewhat similar in its near chances and fortuitous happenings by sea and land to that one that hung on the fortunes of Cynwich Castle or the field of Edington (878).

In perpetuating and celebrating anew a nation's victory on St. Michael's Mount not only would the memorial have the inner or spiritual meaning that all such memorials should have, but it would at the same time have an educative value for the military strategist. It should indicate how in that gloomy marsh land the valiant king with his men of Somerset turned to bay ; how he strengthened his primitive defences and inner lines of communication ; and how, by a heaven-born strategy, he thwarted and surrounded his foes.

In John Strachey's list of Religious Houses in Somerset there is the following notice of Athelney—" Site of Abbey with messuage in Ling and ' Michael's Borow,' sold 36 Henry Viii to John Timborow by Clayton." Further, under the list of Somerset Chantries enumerated in the Somerset Record Society volumes there is a mention under Lynge (*i.e.* Ling) of " The Free Chapel of St. Michael at Borow within the Parish

there. The Chapel aforesaid with a close called Chapel haye containing an acre with a road leading to the same, per annum ii/*s.*" In a Bridgwater payment about the same date there is "A Rent Resolute to the King, as of the Monastery of Athelney per annum iv/i" (1548). From the above notices it may be inferred that the Royal foundation of Athelney Abbey, after an existence of 650 years, was finally dissolved and passed into lay hands.

The best description left of it by ancient writers is that of William of Malmesbury (1090–1143) who says that the Island was in his time inaccessible owing to bogs and morasses. It had a very large wood of alders, close by which harboured stags and wild goats, and other beasts. The land on which the monastery stood was only about two acres, a much smaller space than that now represented by the Island of Athelney. The first Monastery Church was built in a somewhat peculiar manner, four piers driven into the ground supporting the whole fabric, four apses being constructed round it. Apparently the church was made of wood, perhaps like the "lignea Basilica" of King Ina at Glaston (*c.* 700) as far as the building materials were concerned. The type was Eastern such as that described by Freeman in his account of Byzantine Architecture. The churches were at first universally round or octagonal. The nave was but little extended in length. Four columns occupying the centre of the building served to support the cupola, the use of which is universal. The idea of placing a cupola in the centre of a Greek cross ran through the famous church of St. Sophia.[1] By way of illustration Sir John Spelman in his "Vita Alfredi" draws a plan of the supposed model with its four cancelli, chori or capellae (p. 131). William of Malmesbury thought that the circular shape was adopted because of the limited space on the island itself—but possibly the eastern model was deliberately chosen and a real eastern basilica arose. The dedication in full was to SS. Saviour, Peter, Paul and Egelwine, the latter said to have been a hermit of regal descent who had lived on the island before King Alfred made it his refuge.

1. "History of Architecture," pp. 168-170.

Old Serenus Cressy writes "With regard to King Alfred's former vow he presently changed his Castle into a Monastery of Religious men—Here he also built a Church of no great extent because the straitness of the place would not permit a larger, but it was built upon a new fashioned model. For four pillars fixed in the ground sustained the whole fabric which consisted of a spherical form compassing it around." Dean Stanley in his account of the Eastern Church (p. 306) notes that there are but four columns in an Orthodox Eastern Church. The Rev. Thomas Hugo thinks that "Alfred's builders derived the idea of their work from the late Roman buildings to which they were accustomed," but surely this point deserves further criticism.[1] It is doubtful whether excavations can ever throw light now upon the original design especially if the whole work was of timber. A stone church must have replaced the lignea basilica, but this in 1321 was in ruins as the following extract from Bishop Drokensford's Register proves: "Bishop to his official Archdeacons, Deans, Rectors, etc. The Conventual Church of Athelney is ruinous —no funds for repairs: allow the monks to plead their case in Churches on Holy Days after Gospel, assuring contributors, if contrite, of 30 days Indulgence ab injunctis penitentiis." Kingsbury 3 Kal: July, 1321.

Bishop Godwin wrote in his "de Praesulibus" (A.D. 1601) that "the walls of the Abbey were still standing partly" but he says nothing about the church. In a series of letters written to J. Aubrey it is said that Athelney ruins and, with it, no doubt the church, were all being dug down, October 5th, 1674. "They continue digging up the ruins and foundations of that sometime famous Abbey. Some of the slabs (probably of blue lias) were being fitted into the adjoining buildings. The Church is said to have been on the top of the hill to the North-East." One of the very few relics of the church is said to have been a tombstone of one of its monks recorded in the "Somerset & Dorset Notes and Queries" (vol. vii, p. 25) as lying in Lyng Church. Collinson notices (vol. i, p. 88) that, in 1674, the labourers, who dug down Athelney ruins were

1. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. xliii, p. 101.

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ST. MICHAEL'S MOUNT.

FROM THE SOUTH.

employed by Captain Hacker and that they discovered the foundations of the church and bases of pillars, elegant tracery work of windows, and divers pieces of sculptured freestone, still retaining the marks of paint and gold.

For the moment our chief interest lies with the ancient Chapel and St. Michael's Borough, or, as it is now called, "Borough Mump." From the notice already given it may be assumed (1) That it was a Free Chapel dedicated to St. Michael. A free chapel was presumably a chapel built on Royal Demesne and they were called "free" because they were exempt from episcopal jurisdiction, the incumbent being appointed as if he were a private chaplain and the bishop having no power to refuse institution. Borough Mump was undoubtedly part of Saxon Royal Demesne in King Alfred's time and part of the original dedication.

(2) Borough Mump and the chapel on it were both in the Parish of Lynge or East Lynge "with a road leading to the same." This is rather a significant entry, as the road must be one leading from Athelney to Borough Mump. The river Parret is not, therefore, a parochial boundary in this particular case and the road as part of the original endowment crossed the Parret river and went with St. Michael's Chapel.

(3) Collinson who had access to the old Register of Athelney Abbey says (vol. i, p. 85) that the ancient chapel on Borough Mump was dedicated to St. Michael and that mention of it "occurs very early in the memorials of Athelney Abbey, to which it was appendant." In reality therefore, Athelney Abbey and St. Michael's Borough were part and parcel of King Alfred's first bequest to the Thanksgiving Abbey, and also part and parcel of his original defences.

At the Dissolution they were disposed of separately, Free Chapels and Chantries being subject to a separate Legislature Act (4th Nov., 1547). If we go further back and seek the origin of this road its beginnings seem to point back to that communication which, partly a bridge, and partly a causeway or drove, must be attributed to King Alfred when he constructed the military defences at and from the Island of Athelney. The region hereabouts preserves on the whole its ancient features. It has never been possible to build over

it and up to recent days it is liable to inundations. Within historical times the flood levels have not really altered much although a great deal has been done to carry off the floods by artificial means.

The G.W. Railway from Bridgwater to Taunton runs across the marshy region and near Durston Station a view of Borough Mump or St. Michael's Borough may be had but this section of the railway itself has been covered with water within living memory, whilst the line from Durston to Langport is occasionally interrupted at the present time. Sudden deluges in spring or autumn will convert the levels into one vast lake. The extent of Athelney Island, raised above the line of encroaching water, will be seen to be more than two acres (the space assigned to it by William of Malmesbury), perhaps four or five acres. To-day the floods would flow right round it but for the Baltmoor Wall which is comparatively modern and keeps the water from passing round Curry Moor into Northmoor. Upon examination of the levels this Baltmoor Wall would seem to lie across the line of communication between Athelney Island and Lyng Church and so to Taunton and the lower slopes of the Quantocks. It was probably part of King Alfred's scheme not only to block the passage of the Tone, (the ancient waterway leading from the tidal Parret, to Taunton, and passing under Athelney), but, at the same time, to defend the Vale of Taunton, Watchet, the old port of Quantock, and the country west of this.

Although it is difficult to assign with accuracy strategic positions at this distance of time, even in a comparatively untouched wilderness, it seems safe to presume that Alfred's Causeway between the east end of Athelney Island and Borough Mump is really represented to-day by the straight bit of road, half or threequarters of a mile in length now visible and used as a road. It was never part of a public highway as traffic did not pass this way and main roads were out of the question in a land of quaking bogs and morasses. The road was manifestly a strategic road and it may have followed the line of a former "drove," and King Alfred may have improved upon it for the particular purpose he had in hand, but a glance at the whole situation prompts the thought that it must have

connected the island of Athelney and the mump. The road is continued over the Parret and crosses a bridge to Borough Mump.

It forms a parish boundary to the present day dividing East Lyng from Stoke St. Gregory Parish and takes the boundary of East Lynge across the river Parret which is rather an unusual thing. East Lynge always has included St. Michael's Borough as part of the parish and, at the Dissolution, this section was looked upon as chantry property, connected closely with Athelney.

It seems more than probable that here is the bridge that King Alfred made and here the extension of the bridge and causeway "operosa prolatatione," as Bishop Asser describes it. The way and fashion of making a drove is the same to-day as it always was. The first foundations consist of branches of fascines and green wood, especially elm logs, which apparently withstand immersion even better than oak logs. A kind of "corduroy" track is constructed upon which more solid material can be heaped. In course of time the form of a metalled road appears but it must be remembered that as these droves, flanked on either side by ditches or "rhines" for drainage purposes, were meant only for cattle and sheep, their purpose, to begin with, was merely to supply some temporary want. Even at the present time so rotten is the foundation that to replace a gate at the end of a drove it is necessary to fasten the two bottom ends of the gate posts together under the ground by means of a "spanner" of green elm, otherwise the gate posts would either collapse or bend owing to the insecure foundation. Another curious fact is that the elms themselves, although they grow well above the flood level, immediately die when their roots reach the moist peat and it is possible to guess where the flood or soaked level ends by the standing rows of elms which offer a rough line of demarcation.[1]

1. Many of the above facts relating to Athelney and the vicinity were communicated to the writer by Colonel Barrett, of Moredon, in North Curry parish, a late owner of Athelney Island. St. Michael's Mount has been in the possession of the Chard family for many generations and is still owned by Mrs. Barrett, the sister of Colonel Chard, of Rorke Drift fame, in the Zulu War of 1879.

Collinson says (vol. i, p. 89) that two bells in the tower of East Ling Church were brought from the tower of Borough Chapel but these were not the ancient ones, as they bore the dates of 1607 and 1625. A third bell had been taken to Middlezoy Church and served as a treble, the Churchwardens of Middlezoy undertaking to return it when required. Collinson does not give the exact date of this transaction. But if we suppose that, at the dissolution of Free Chapels, the bell-metal of St. Michael's Chapel, weighing 1800lbs. was disposed of, as stated in the Chantry Accounts, the conclusion must be that at some date between 1548 and 1607 this chapel was disused. There must have been a new life given to it to account for the presence of the above-mentioned three bells taking the place of the old ones.

Collinson does not clear up the situation when he says (vol. i, p. 85) that 120 troops of Goring's army fortified themselves "in the ruins" before they were driven out by Fairfax.

Could Collinson be mistaken on this point and seeing the ruinous state of the chapel in 1790 have concluded that it had been in decay for a long time? In the Presbyterian Classis (1645) Burrow St. Michael appears as a distinct church. On the question of its occupation by Goring's troops it is possible that this somewhat unscrupulous fighter held the church just as it was, whether in ruins or not.

To-day, according to a recent arrangement, a Parish Church of St. Michael, Borough Bridge, dating from 1836, has taken the place of the old foundation of what must have been, for centuries, a Chantry Chapel in honour of St. Michael, presumably since King Alfred's days.

For the sake of convenience the modern parish includes not only a section of East Lynge but also outlying parts of others, *viz.* Middlezoy, North Petherton and Stoke St. Gregory. But this modern development does not affect the first and most interesting chapter of St. Michael's Borough as part of the original Athelney foundation.

It is interesting to note that the old name of Borough Mump was "Tot-eyot" or the "Outlook Island," just as so often we meet with "Tothill," meaning an outlook hill, similar to

the one near Stoke Courcy Castle. Such vantage spots near castles and fortresses were not uncommon and were frequently so called, the words being of Anglo-Saxon origin ("totian," to lift up). Eyot is still used on the "Thames," *e.g.* "Chiswick eyot." "Tot-yate" is preserved in an Athelney Charter and it also occurs in a document describing a Parret flood when a wall called "South lake wall," lying between "La Path" and "Tutteyate tree," choked certain water-courses called Runes or Rhine.[1] Further, we read that, in 10 Henry IV, a certain William of "Toteyate" and his wife had an acre of land in Rode, North Petherton.[2]

A word may not be amiss here in the midst of this local description to show the value of this strategic "path" across South Lake Moor and Barlake Moor from Borough Mump to Aller. Looking at it from the mump it conveys the idea of being easily defended. But its principal strategic use was no doubt to give King Alfred a path along which, unseen and unknown, he could cross and re-cross at his pleasure. He could quickly mobilise on the south and call his levies to and from "Summurtunensis paga" or Somerton and Langport. Should he concentrate on the south the way round the south-east corner at the Polden ridge was open to him and so to Selwood and the Forest region. When the Vikings were at Vikings Pill on the lower Parret and in the vicinity of Downend that notable concentration was, we believe, really made and the decisive battle fought at Edington on the Polden Ridge. Without "the path" between Borough Bridge and Aller this could not have been effected so easily, if at all.

The best authority on what Athelney Island and Borough Mump both were in the time of King Alfred is Bishop Asser, the king's biographer and, according to his own showing, a visitor at the abbey itself. Asser says that the Island of Athelney, could only be approached "cauticis." Mr. Stevenson and others read the word as if it was "nauticis," *i.e.* akin to "navibus" and meaning boats, but surely "nauticis" is a very unusual form. Du Cange explains "cautica" as equi-

1. Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1384.
2. Somerset Fines, Som. Record Soc.

valent to "via strata," *i.e.* a raised path or "drove" such, indeed, as may still be seen in the Petherton marshes.

Asser says that in the scheme of King Alfred's defence there were two forts one of them, we take it, on the eastern corner of Athelney Island itself, where the Thanksgiving Abbey was built; the other on Borough Mump. The late Bishop Clifford conjectured that the two forts were at either end of the path leading from Borough Mump to Aller. But it is more likely that the mixed bridge (*pons*) and causeway constructed by a toilsome extension (*operosa prolatatione*) was the road already described and connecting Athelney Island and the Toteyate or outlook island of Borough Mump. Such a communication was essential in the first instance and the distance of half a mile or so would not involve much work. This road must have been often used by the monks afterwards and really connected the two ends of Lynge parish together.

In 878 we may picture King Alfred on his "pons" or on the outlook island. Far down on the eastern horizon rose the smooth green Tor of Glaston over which the great Archangel seemed for the moment, to have spread his wings in vain. Here was that Spiritual heart and kernel, here the "Delphi" of the Dumnonian race. The king might well have paused at this last and most suggestive sight. Was God's Kingdom on earth, as Christ had taught it, really gone? Was his tabernacle to be defiled for ever? The king, bowed before the thought of the Archangel and, indeed, long after the great crisis of his own life and of his nation was passed he ended his work on "Boethius," with a prayer that God might always direct him according to his will "by the obedience he paid to St. Michael." If King Alfred thought thus when he finished the small task of writing a book how much deeper were his thoughts when the awful task of championing and restoring his throne and nation was cast upon him? The vision of St. Cuthbert cheered and strengthened him. The Spirit of God might yet brood over the face of the troubled waters and a new and revivified world arise as by a separate act of Creation!

In following at a great distance of time the ancient and catastrophic turns of a sweeping historical crisis it is well to call up and realise the depth and strength of those emotions,

FROM ST. MICHAEL'S MOUNT, LOOKING SOUTH—TOWARDS ALLER.

BEGINNING OF THE "PATH" TO ALLER.

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spiritual, national, and otherwise, that guided the counsels and strengthened the determination of the leaders. Nor must the feelings of the combatant rank and file be overlooked. No true historian, who wishes to gain a right perspective can afford to ignore anything that helps to form the morale and discipline of armies facing one another in a deadly struggle. In A.D. 878 the Heathen Danes were triumphant, and cruelly and bestially triumphant. The Lordanes, *i.e.* the "Lord Danes" were the Huns of those days and their chief desire was to exterminate the Christian religion. Against them was arrayed a greater and more powerful world than they could conceive. They could burn, destroy and murder but they could not quench the spirit. They were fighting against an invisible world, a world prefigured by the great Archangel himself. The Belgians have proved this again to-day. St. Michael the patron Saint of Brussels rules afresh on the tower of the Hotel de Ville with the dragon prostrate under his feet.

In his solitude King Alfred's thoughts may have turned to Rome and Italy and his visits there. For some say that he went there twice with Ethelwulf his father. The greatness and glory of the Eternal City must have struck his youthful mind and fired it with the visions of its early magnificence. It was in an age that had followed Charlemagne (800) and at a time when great theories of Church and State were abroad : when emperors and popes seemed to assume all temporal and spiritual power in their own hands. When Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne there seemed at the moment nothing more to be achieved in human affairs. Surely here was the Lord's "Anointed"; here the sceptre and trident of the whole world. Yet, not long after, Charlemagne's mighty empire, achieved under such notable auspices, fell to pieces. King Alfred in his lonely "Toteyate" might have remembered how he also was anointed King of Demetia by Pope Leo IV, (whatever this ceremony really meant), but where was his kingdom? The answer might be a few acres of marsh and morass. He would arise from his reverie a humble and contrite soul, ready to share his last crust, as the story goes he did, with the first beggar that came his

way. "Put not your trust in Princes!" How true these words of Scripture!

But not yet had St. Michael and the host of Heaven departed! Yonder was the low long line of Polden. Could this dominant ridge still be saved and some salvage snatched from the wreckage and ruin? Could Glaston and the Cemetery of Saints be rescued?

Here it may be noted that in any warlike strategy in the Valley of the Parret and Mid Somerset the line of the Poldens, comparatively small and insignificant in itself and not rising more than 200–300 in height, was always an important feature. No manœuvre in Mid Somerset was complete without its possession. From "Marshalls Elm" on the south-east, (where the first skirmish took place in the Civil War), to Vikings Pill and Downend on its north-west extremity, where the earliest landing-place existed east of the Parret the Polden ridge served as a pivot. The most important end of Polden Hill was the "Burgh de Capite Montis" and Vikings Pill because, at this junction, lay the command of the lower Parret, and the mouth of the Parret where Comwich was the old landing place in ancient times. Obviously the command of the lower Parret and its mouth was more essential for victory than that of the upper Parret, for this reason, that invasion could follow the rush of the tidal Bore for twenty-five miles inland if no riparian defences existed. This kind of attack suited the Vikings exactly and so in reality, Comwich and Comwich Passage, as points of defence, were of the utmost strategic importance on the Parret. The richness of the valleys of the Brue and Parret, together with the monastic wealth of Glaston served as an additional stimulus to invaders and so we are not surprised to find that around the mouth of the Parret the most stern fights took place and the most decisive results were always gained. Comwich ford was always historic.

History confirms this. In 682 Kentwine drove the Waelas to the Parret mouth when the Saxon invasion swept down from Pen Selwood along the range of Polden to the sea: in 845 Eanwulf the Alderman and Bishop Ealstan of Sherborne fought with the Vikings at the Parret mouth and defeated them and in 878, during the Alfred campaign we feel sure

FROM ST. MICHAEL'S MOUNT, LOOKING EAST—OVER CURRY MOOR.

THE LINE OF POLDEN IN THE DISTANCE. GLASTON TOR ON THE SOUTH-EAST.

that Saxons and Vikings fought again. Comwich or Cynwith is continually asserting its old-world importance: so, also, did the pill at Downend and, at both points, were ancient forts and defences. To-day it is difficult to realise this, especially in the case of Downend and Puriton. It requires the gift of a strong imagination to re-constitute the old local features. At this point the railway cutting and Dunball Station with the portion of line running by have materially altered the aspect of Downend. Vikings Pill close by, has probably been silted up by the shifting of the Parret westwards[1]; the new Bristol road never existed till quite recently and the way to Bridgwater was by Crane Bridge. Further, the modern cement works of Dunball have added to the confusion, and above all, since 1677, the well-known loop of the Parret where ships anchored for centuries has been removed by artificial means. No wonder, therefore, that the turns of the Viking campaign of 878 have been obscured and that strangers unacquainted with the wayward history of the Parret have been puzzled beyond measure. Old pills vanish altogether.

There is again the puzzle of levels and of tidal floods. Sometimes the moors of Mid-Somerset revert to old features. Outside Athelney, nature is then the same to-day as it was a thousand years ago. Long lines of half submerged willows show the direction of the rhines which were dug centuries ago. Wild fowls foregather in the marshes of North Petherton and North Curry, although not in the same quantity as of old: now and then a rare bird like a ruff or bittern haunts the place and the snipe in summer "drums" aloft above its nest. Salmon come up the Parret though in reduced numbers: eelvers migrate up the tidal river and along the side in their mysterious thread-like columns.[2]

1. Paulet Parish Tithe Map.

2. The writer used often to see a centenarian of Athelney, William Woodland by name, whose forefathers had lived and died at the place, all of great ages. His daughter Mrs. Laver, who lives on Bridgwater Quay, is still alive (1921) and her boast is that her father, grandfather and great grandfather all lived to be one hundred years old, surely a record. Woodland's occupation was fishing and cutting and "buffing" withies to make baskets at Athelney. He spoke of former days when he caught salmon, fished for eels,

At a place called "Straw-close" identified by an old inhabitant of North Petherton called Peach, or Peche, (perhaps a descendant of Sabina Peche, the Forester-in-Fee of the Forests of Somerset, with house and lands at North Newton), the famous jewel of King Alfred was found in 1693. The owner of the land in North Petherton Park was Nathaniel Palmer, of Fairfield, Stoke Courcy, whose wife was a member of the family of Wrothe (or Wrotham) who centuries ago, had held the office of "Foresters-in-Fee" for the Forests of Somerset. The jewel was given by his son, Thomas Palmer, the well-known antiquary, to the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, where it is still to be seen. The present representatives of the Palmer family are the Acland-Hoods, of Fairfield and St. Audries. Much has been written about this priceless work of Saxon artists with the legend "Aelfred caused me to be made" and many theories have been advanced as to the figure shown on the obverse. Dr. Hickes in his "Thesaurus" (vol. i, p. 144) expresses a doubt whether it was meant to represent Our Lord Himself or St. Cuthbert held in especial honour by the king and who, according to Simeon, consoled him with that open oracle before the battle of Edington; others have thought it to be St. Neotus who was the spiritual counsellor of the king in his adversities. But if the figure is that of a soldier clothed in the Saxon military vest or tunic and girt with a sword and belt may it not be meant for the militant Archangel St. Michael himself? It is a matter of conjecture as to how the jewel got lost, whether it was accidently dropped by the king himself, or whether it was given by him to the monks of Athelney and so got lost after the Dissolution.[1]

After his great deliverance and victory at Edington King Alfred proceeded to build up his shattered realm. Tradition

gathered eelvers in sacks for poultry food, shot wild birds, a veritable "Son of the Marshes." Above all, he spoke of King Alfred in his unlettered way as if he had heard about him only yesterday. He remembered how one of King Alfred's moorland fishermen brought back in baskets that miraculous draught of fishes. The baskets Woodland made were probably of the same pattern as those made one thousand years ago on the moor!

1. *See* "The Works of King Alfred," Jubilee edition, vol. i, p. 330.

has handed down that, on the more purely human side, his subjects celebrated his success by inaugurating an "Ashen Faggot" ball at Taunton a tradition to which no less serious a historian than John Richard Green alludes.[1] It may be worth noting that up to recent times the custom of burning ashen faggots on St. Thomas's Eve or Christmas Day has survived in West Somerset and that there are many who, like the writer, can remember it. But, whatever the occasion or manner of the celebration, we may be quite sure that the king did not allow excessive rejoicings to interfere with the real work of national recuperation. These festivities may have been in honour of St. Thomas, as the patron Saint of beggars, the day of the original dedication of the abbey being on December 20th, the "Vigilia Sancti Thomae Apostoli." The dedication day was afterwards changed to August 30th.

The fortunes of Athelney Abbey as a great National Thanksgiving Abbey following upon a thrilling national victory are not easy to follow or explain. When King Canute (1017) supplemented Alfred's original endowments by giving Sevington, Athelney is described in the Charter as "famosissima familia," situated in that sacred and most celebrated place called Athelney. This agrees with a much later account of Simeon of Durham who spoke of Athelney as "Monasterium praepulchrum." Ethelred, Abbot of Rievaulx, called it "nobilissimum" and Brompton "famosum." The only monastery that could compare with Athelney as far as situation and other circumstances went in this region of Somerset was Muchelney. But there was not the same historical prestige about Muchelney (the great Eyot or Island), as there was about the island of the Ethelings or nobles as Athelney meant, sometimes termed "Insula Clitonum." Moreover it must be remembered that in 894 King Alfred gave all the tithes of Somerton-Erleigh to the Abbey of Athelney, a grant confirmed by William de Erleigh in A.D. 1168. Athelney had also a pension of ten marcs out of the Church of Somerton.[2] This church was dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel. Con-

1. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. i, p. 37, and vol. xi, p. 122.
2. *Collinson*, vol. iii, p. 186.

sidering the importance of Somerton and of the "Summertunensis paga" and their extreme loyalty to King Alfred in his extremities the gift carries with it a great significance. It is true that in 1205 Bishop Savaric appropriated to the Abbey of Muchelney the tithes of Somerton but this was more than three hundred years after Alfred's death. Even before King Alfred's time Somerton was, as already noted, fortified and walled round by the Saxon kings and here King Ina had a palace or castle. The place was overrun by the Danes in Alfred's time under Hubba and Inguar.[1] But the site was always most important in Saxon times. Indeed, it must have ranked above Ilchester as a Saxon capital. Its church looked to Athelney Abbey as the symbol of Alfred's victory, at any rate in 870–900. There is a notice of Somerton Church in the Close Rolls of 1218, in King John's reign when the "King's men of Somerton" (a phrase that lingers long in the Pipe Rolls and elsewhere) took by permission of the King's Foresters three goodly oaks from North Petherton Forest wherewith to repair the belfry of Somerton Church.

In 1234 we are also told in the Close Roll how Henry de Ortiaco and others gave one hundred oaks from Petherton Forest wherewith to build or repair the dormitory at Athelney a notice that certainly conveys a good idea of the extent of the monastic sleeping quarters. The decay in 1321 of the abbey, above alluded to, is hard to understand. At any rate, the requirements of the Athelney dormitory were large in 1234.

Another great and important endowment made over to Athelney, perhaps the greatest endowment of all, was that of "Bishopston," at Logworborough or Montacute, that tall hill on which there was once a chapel to St. Michael, and where, at the time of the conquest, King William's half-brother, the Count of Moretain, built his castle. Professor Freeman describes "how it was around the walls of the Castle on the peaked hill that Englishmen dealt the last blow for freedom in the western shires. It was there that the last patriotic rising was crushed by the heavy hand of Bishop Geoffrey of Coutance by the help, one blushes to say, of the English

1. Cotton. MS., Julius F., vi.

forces of the shires and cities already conquered. The doom of the vanquished was dreadful." Long before King Alfred's time the Burgh or Borough of Logwor, a Celtic chieftain probably, had been a strong place and a sacred "Arx." Here it is said Joseph of Arimathea who had planted the seeds of Christianity under the Tor of Glaston was buried. "Here also was found that famous crucifix, together with other relics, such as a small cross, a bell and a black text of the Gospels discovered by a carpenter and destined to be miraculously conveyed by Tofig's Kine to Waltham Holy Cross, in Essex. Harold accepted the tradition and added to the wealth of Waltham Abbey and it was before the crucifix found on Montacute Hill or the Borough of Logwor that Harold knelt in prayer on his march to Senlac and there received, so it is said, that mysterious warning from the bowing of the awful form wrought on the sacred stone. It was this cross which gave the Saxons their war-cry and it was in its name that Harold's men bore up against the rushes of the Norman host in the fated field and it was at the abbey of Waltham Holy Cross—the cross of Logworsborough or Montacute that Count Harold was destined to sleep his last long sleep."[1]

The name of Logwor is very ancient, and sixteen hides of land at Logwor borough was given to the old Abbey of Glaston by Baldred. Much of the land in Tintinhull and the vicinity was also in Glaston possession. The traditions of the old abbey were almost as strong here as at Insula Avallonia. But when Bishopston and Montacute appear as possessions of Athelney it becomes a matter of rather interesting speculation to know how and why this transference was made. There is no direct historical evidence that this endowment of Montacute was made by King Alfred himself, but he seems to have been the only possible donor. Glaston lay in ruins; her church was "penitus vastata"; the monastery lacked its well-known occupants ("desideravit notos incolas," as William of Malmesbury, a Glaston monk and a Somerset man, wrote). The possession of the abbey, derelict and deserted, would naturally have come into the hands of King Alfred when the

1. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. lii, Article by the Rev. W. Greswell.

Danes were defeated in 878 as would all the Glaston princely endowments given by Ina, Kentwine, Kenwalch and others. A new era in church history faced the king.

Could Alfred have thought of linking Montacute, the sacred "arx," second only to Glaston Tor, with his new Thanksgiving Abbey at Athelney? Athelney and Montacute would appeal to all. King Ina, whom Alfred followed in some respects, had built a famous church at Glaston and dedicated it in honour of "Dominus Salvator and of the Apostles SS. Peter and Paul" (704), and this was exactly the dedication of Athelney Abbey. Could one example have prompted the other? A new centre of spiritual life and thought might arise with Athelney as the new hearth not far from St. Michael's Borough, and with St. Michael's wing at Montacute signifying the same tutelage and the same protection. The Danes had destroyed Glaston certainly but the wonderful wealth of the old abbey was still permanent on flood, moor, field and forest. This at any rate would serve to start the new conception. The peat-fire of Glaston could be carried elsewhere and kept alive as a vestal flame. The moorland would be lighted afresh.

In the south of Somerset and not far from Montacute, King Alfred gave to Athelney Abbey ten hides or cassates of land in Long Sutton. This, with Lynge, seems to have been one of the earliest gifts as the date is given as taking place in A.D. 878, the year of his victory over the Danes.[1] Shaftesbury nunnery appears to have been founded also at the same date, *i.e.* about 878, Athelred, Archbishop of Canterbury, appearing as a witness in the charters of donation. There seems to be no doubt about the authenticity of the Long Sutton charter and the Athelney cartulary quoted by Collinson (vol. iii, p. 177). The manor of Pitney-Lorti, the church of Pitney and the manor of Knolle were all close to Somerton and held of the Abbot of Athelney.[2] Other endowments followed in due course, King Ethelred (A.D. 1009) being credited with the rich gift of Hamme or Hamp near Bridgwater, a knight's fee in "Kirby's Quest" (1327), held of the king by the abbot.

1. Jubilee Edition of King Alfred's Works, vol. i, p. 388.
2. *Collinson*, vol. iii, p. 130.

Together with Hamme was always coupled Adscombe,[1] a romantic little settlement up Seven Wells Combe on the Quantocks where the remains of an old chapel still survives, with " Chapel Lane " adjoining.

Adscombe was held " pro victu monachorum," *i.e.* for the food of the Athelney monks and from it and the woods and pasture, mutton and venison may have come in goodly store. It would have provided Hamme also with firewood, if necessary, and was a desirable addition to the somewhat marshy tenement at Hamme. Not far off, on the western side of Bridgwater, near Hamme, was a chapel to St. Saviour, noticed by Leland. It is possible that Adscombe Chapel furnished the beginnings of church life, or at any rate fostered them. The early church of Over Stowey was dedicated to SS. Peter and Paul and the cemetery or churchyard there was called the cemetery of SS. Peter and Paul up to the time of the Dissolution.[2] Not far from Over Stowey Church and in Nether Stowey parish an old chapel used to stand upon Castle Hill Mount, the site of a Norman rectangular fort in subsequent times. The chapel was dedicated to St. Michael.

On the south of the Quantocks and in Broomfield parish Athelney Abbey held Oggesole and other tenements. Clavelshay or Classy in North Petherton belonged also to the abbey.[3] West of the Quantocks and in Combe Flory parish a chapel belonging to Athelney Abbey was bought after the Dissolution by Sir William ffraunces, knight, with a " Rent resolute to the King as of the Monastery of Athelney, iiii/*s.* p.a."[4]

Further West the Abbot of Athelney was endowed with a knight's fee at Bossington in Porlock, another very romantic site close to the sea, " appropriated to the table of the Monks," like Adscombe on the Quantocks. It does not appear who the donor was, but in all probability the donor was either King Alfred himself or one of the Royal Saxon line. At Porlock there was said to have been a Royal Saxon abode

1. Valor Ecclesiasticus.
2. Weaver's " Wells Wills."
3. *Collinson*, vol. iii, p. 72.
4. " Somerset Chantries," Somerset Record Soc., p. 35.

and hunting chace.[1] From Selworthy, the adjoining parish, the Abbot of Athelney had a pension of three marcs given to the Abbey by William de Luckham (Luccombe) out of his demesne in the parish (A.D. 1201). These out-lying membra in the Quantock and Exmoor country, whether all given to begin with or not, were very desirable additions to the monastery of Athelney and its more rich appendages in the low-lying levels of Somerset. The change of pasturage alone for the abbot's flocks and herds meant much and added to the pastoral wealth of the community to say nothing of the opportunities of hunting and fowling. Ling, Bishopstown and Montacute, Sutton, Ilton and Hamme all furnished a good nucleus, rich beyond all question as wealth counted then.

A further question of a most interesting character meets us at the outset, *viz.* what kind of monastery was set up by King Alfred ? Bishop Godwin in his "De Praesulibus" (p. 69), remarks :

"In King Alfred's time all the Monasteries of England were destroyed by the Danes so that for the space of 90 years after, monkery ceased throughout the realm." In his account of Athelney Abbey[2] the late Rev. Thomas Hugo makes the questionable statement that it was founded "for monks of the Order of St. Benedict." In his foundation charter of Long Sutton King Alfred gives the place "for the subsistence of monks who, therein, under regular exercises, (not of necessity Benedictine), devoutly serve Almighty God." Asser's account gives us a glimpse of the constitution of the abbey and its working.

"He King Alfred laboured to gather monks of different races in this Monastery and, in the beginning he made John a priest and monk, an old Saxon by race, Abbot. Then he brought certain priests and deacons from across the sea. He further gathered very many of the Gallic nation among them were some children whom he commanded to be brought up at the same Monastery and at a later date to be raised to the monastic order. And, in this monastery I saw one who was

1. *Collinson*, vol. ii, p. 36.

2. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. xliii, p. 100.

wearing monastic dress and he was not the only one of that race." Now, whatever Athelney Monastery was it would surely not be a Benedictine one, judging from Asser's description. It was more like a "Familia" of the old Celtic type representative of the monasticism that had prevailed in Glamorgan or throughout the Kingdom of "Ancient Dumnonia." It was a "collegium" and school as well as a monkish retreat.

One thing seems certain and it is that neither at Athelney nor Shaftesbury was the rule of the Benedictine order observed for the simple reason that it was not introduced into England in King Alfred's time (847–901). It prevailed of course in the time of Dunstan (924–985) and also of Ethelwold (908–984), Bishop of Winchester, who introduced the Rule from Fleury and forcibly expelled secular priests from Winchester, Chertsey, Melton and Ely. Godwin writes in his "De Praesulibus": "Ethelwold was a great partisan of monks and no less an enemy to married priests. At his first coming to Winchester he expelled them out of the old monastery to place (Benedictine) monks. In the year 867 the Danes had slain all the monks they could find in Winchester. From which time secular priests inhabited the same, being authorised by King Alfred so to do, till 971, when a company of Monks were brought from Abingdon of the Bishop's old acquaintance to shoulder them out of doors." Our conclusion may be this that King Alfred discovered a *via media*. The married priesthood were not debarred from their functions but monasteries, strictly speaking, were reserved for celibates. This really was the reasonable view.

King Edgar (954–975) is said to have given the manor of Suthburne to Bishop Ethelwold on condition that he translated the "Rule of the Benedict" from Latin into Anglo-Saxon.[1] But the obvious inference is that, at Edgar's date the Benedictines were not known much in England or in

1. Wharton's "Anglia Sacra," vol. i, p. 604; and also vol. ii, pp. 91 and 194. Fragments of this Anglo-Saxon translation exist on parchment at Wells Cathedral. *See* First Report of Royal Hist. MSS. Commission, 1874. This has been reproduced in Arnold Shroer's A.S. version of the Benedictine Rule, Kassel, 1885.

British Monasteries. In his infancy St. Dunstan was taught by certain disciples of St. Patrick, who migrated from Ireland to Glaston and found this secluded spot fit for study although they found supplies scanty and had to eke out their monastic life by teaching the "filios nobilium," as Osberne (1090) says in his life of St. Dunstan.[1] The above extract throws light upon the depressed state of Glaston, once so richly endowed and as King Alfred does not seem to have restored and endowed it, this fact in itself strengthens the theory that he wished to create a new centre of Religious life around the Thanksgiving Abbey of Athelney.

St. Dunstan was born, it is said, at Edgarly, and was one of the "filii nobilium" owing his instruction to the old school. But St. Dunstan, with his traditional bellows, may be said to have blown up a new flame and a new furnace from the Celtic peat around Glaston. From the mere worldly point of view the magnificent estate was worth recovering and worth devoting to his own especial ideals. Close by there was the legendary bequest of Brent-Marsh made by King Arthur : there were King Ina's reputed endowments, of twenty hides at Brent ; twelve hides at Middelzoy ; twenty hides at Pilton ; twenty hides at Doulting. There was King Kentwine's gift of Monkton on the Quantocks ; Kenwalch's gift of Ferramere, Westhay, Godney and the Islands of Irish Beccaria, (where Beccary Mills are still known) ; Martinsey and Andredsey, *i.e.* the islands of St. Martin and St. Andrew. To recover all these possessions and to devote them to a comparatively new purpose was the ambition of St. Dunstan. King Ina's memory and example helped him as this Saxon king threw aside his kingship and died as a monk at Rome. King Alfred was not like King Ina in this respect. He looked another way during his eventful life and inaugurated upon chaos a new system just as he built that new church at Athelney upon another model. St. Dunstan forged out of his wonderful laboratory another instrument of church rule and church administration and those who succeeded Dunstan are said indeed to have "forged" charters, perhaps those of Ina, in another and less creditable sense.

1. *See also* "Anglia Sacra," vol. ii, p. 92.

From the reign of King Alfred (A.D. 872–901) to the death of Dunstan (A.D. 980), we feel that we are face to face with a great change in English Church History. The tremendous catastrophe of the Danish invasion, ending in the all but extinction of the old monastic and religious life was in itself enough to affect most deeply the current of national life and especially that of Wessex and Mercia. Old anchorages of faith and hope had gone and the people looked upon the ruins of churches, chapels, and monasteries. All places by the sea had suffered especially and such remote corners as Pembroke and St. Davids were accessible to those raids which the Vikings knew so well how to inflict. Very often their methods were to seize on a sea promontory or to occupy a river estuary and, from a camp or fort constructed on a favourable plan, to harry, raid and exact tribute from a helpless population. Until, indeed, King Alfred and his son Edward laid the beginnings of a fleet that would take the offensive if necessary by sea.

Still, we must believe that, after the Peace of Wedmore there was enough left of the old system in Wales and elsewhere upon which to work and build.

It was to Wales and to Asser the Archbishop of St. David's that King Alfred turned; also to Rheims and the Gallic Church.

Chapter V.

Athelney and Rheims.

MONGST the débris of the Abbey of Athelney, after its destruction, a leaden "Ampulla" of very ancient workmanship was discovered of Rheims pattern according to the judgment of the Rev. Thomas Hugo.[1] This relic was in the possession of the late Lady Slade of the family that owned the site of Athelney. An inscription on Athelney Mound set up by John Slade still survives and runs thus :

> "King Alfred the Great in the year of Our Lord 879 (878 ?) having been defeated by the Danes fled for refuge to the Forest of Athelney (North Petherton ?) where he lay concealed from his enemies for the space of a whole year. He soon afterwards regained the possession of his Throne and in grateful remembrance of the protection he had received under the favour of Heaven erected a Monastery on this spot and endowed it with all the lands contained in the Island of Athelney . . . This memorial was founded by John Slade, Esq., of Mansel, the proprietor of Athelney Abbey Farm and Lord of the Manor of North Petherton. A.D. 1801."

In its way this old "Ampulla" may be of even greater interest than the famous Alfred jewel at the Ashmolean. At any rate it may convey a meaning of its own.

Can we infer anything from this "unravished bride of quietness" lying as it did for centuries in Petherton soil ? According to du Cange's Glossary of mediæval terms, the "Ampulla Remensis" or "la Sainte Ampoule," was a vessel in which was kept the sacred Chrism or oil, with which the kings of France were anointed at their coronation at Rheims. How came this Ampulla to King Alfred's Thanksgiving Abbey ?

1. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. xliii, p. 104.

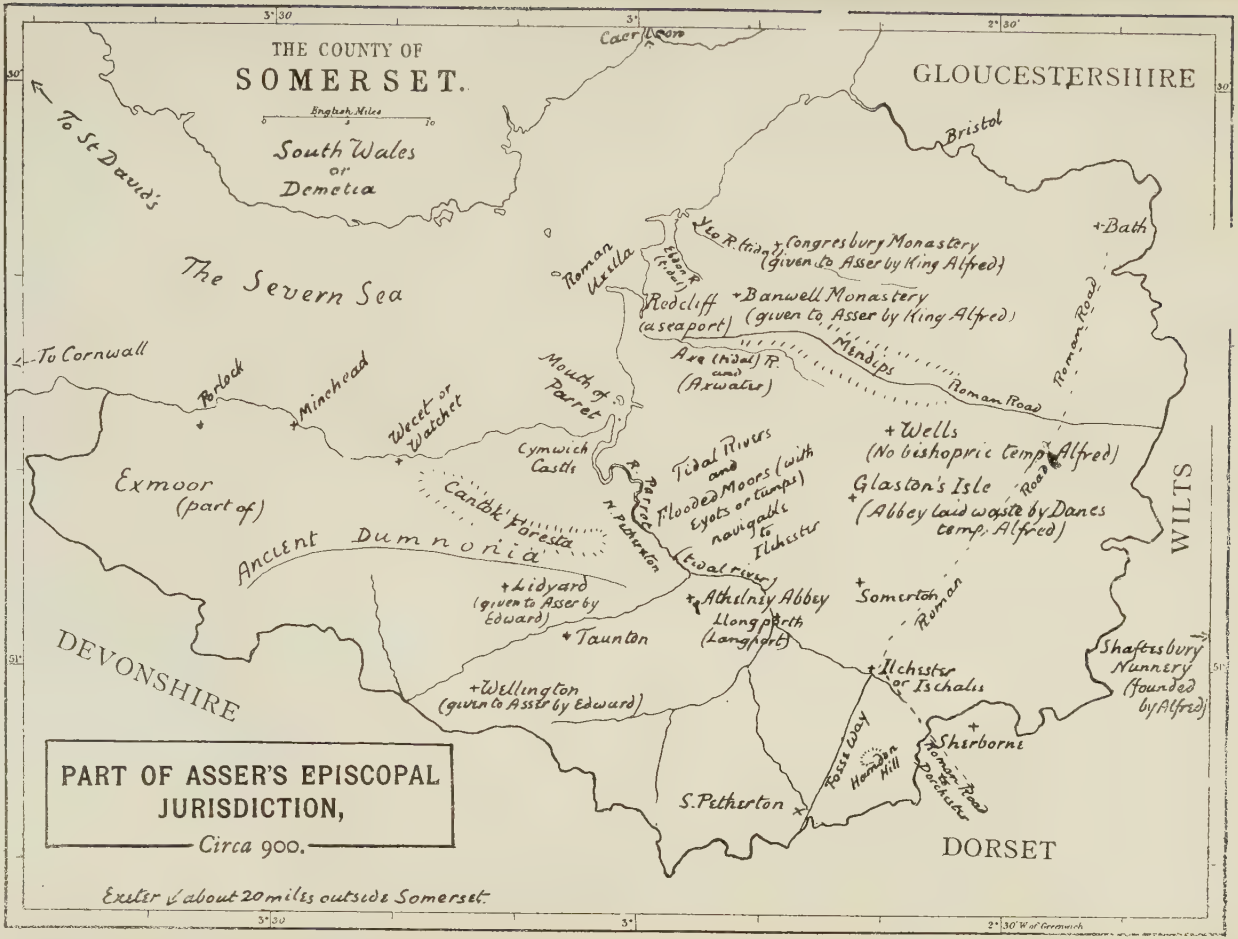
Can we account for this flotsam and jetsam ? In the experimental Science of the Seas and in the unravelling of Ocean Currents, or, indeed, to find evidence of the fortunes of a ship beset and buffeted in stormy waters, it has been the custom to throw overboard a bottle with a message enclosed therein, conveying to any possible finder on a remote shore the exact latitude and longitude of the imperilled ship and crew when the mute messenger was launched upon the deep. Sometimes, perhaps oftener than not, the message goes astray and the world knows no more. It is drifted upon some nook of the Caribbean Seas or a remote fiord of Greenland. But if it really does come to hand it truthfully retails the set of some Equatorial Current or the direction of some prevailing trade wind and we are thus able to trace its course and to note the direction that wind and tide have ordained for it.

To apply this ocean simile to the Rheims ampulla—it drifted to the Isle of Athelney in obedience to some current and in fulfilment of some design. Not altogether was it launched upon a meaningless or inexplicable message, far back in the centuries ; and this opinion is strengthened because, between Rheims and Athelney, there did seem to have been a current, not indeed of ocean's winds or waters, but an intangible heaven-borne sympathy, some wafting of the very Spirit of God. For King Alfred, in his building up of a new State and a new Church upon the ruins of the old, was not merely insular but to a great extent continental and œcumenical in his aspirations. His message to Fulco, Archbishop of Rheims, and the letter of Fulco " gloriosissimo ac Christianissimo Regi Anglorum Aelfredo," still extant, prove the intimacy. In this letter Fulco recommended to the king the famous Grimbald " sacerdos et monachus " of St. Bertin's monastery as a worthy coadjutor to him in his kingly task of patriotic restitution. Fulco says that it must have been by some divine inspiration that Alfred sought to consult and seek out the seat of the Blessed Remigius (*consulere et expetere sedem Beati Remigii*), the church above all the churches of the Gauls (*Ecclesia super omnes Ecclesias Galliarum*). Fulco speaks of Grimbald's fitness for the task, and it is his (the archbishop's) task to hand him over in due canonical manner (*canonice con-*

cedere) and Alfred's to receive him with honour (*honorifice suscipere*). In a significant phrase he added that the Church was Catholic and Apostolic, whether Roman or "across the seas," (*sive Romana sive Transmarina*), the Transmarine feature of the catholicity being particularly applicable to the conditions of King Alfred's rule and dominion and his position with regard to the Celtic Church. Here surely was the germ of unity with the Gallican Church without Rome and outside its system.

With regard to Rheims and its archbishop, it is an interesting local fact to record that the "Epistola Fulconis" was reprinted in Wise's "Asser" (1722) from an ancient manuscript in the possession of the Rev. Prebendary Ford, once Vicar of Banwell, an appropriate resting-place when we remember that Banwell was one of the monasteries given by King Alfred to Bishop Asser. It will be noted that King Alfred did not seek the advice and help of the Pope at Rome, which we might have expected from the fact that Leo IV had anointed him "King of Demetia." He treated the See of Rome and the "Episcopus" there with the respect due to its worldly status and that is all. He sent fifty Mancuses to the Church of St. Peter; also fifty Mancuses to the Church of St. Paul and fifty Mancuses to the Bishop of Rome as a complimentary offering. With impartiality King Alfred, we know, sent greetings and presents to Elias, Patriarch of Jerusalem, and received letters and gifts from him.

Upon this momentous and far-reaching question of papal influence, the position of Bishop Asser, King Alfred's chosen vessel and willing accomplice in the great work of restoring religion, may throw some light. Whatever Asser was he certainly was not a bishop who went to Rome for his "Pallium." When asked by the king to come over to Wessex and help him he replied: "I cannot promise so much without thought and rashly. For I think it not right for me to leave these holy places (St. David's and South Wales) in the which I was brought up and taught and where I received the tonsure and at the last was ordained, for any earthly honour." This passage is very illuminating if simply for the allusion to the tonsure. The Welsh Churchman made a test question of the


THE COUNTY OF
SOMERSET.
English Miles
To St David's
South Wales
or
Demetia
The Severn Sea
GLOUCESTERSHIRE
Caer Leon
Bristol
Bath
Roman Road
Roman Road
Roman Road
Roman Villa
Elborn R. (Tidal)
Yeo R. (tidal)
+Congresbury Monastery (Given to Asser by King Alfred)
Redcliff (a seaport)
+Banwell Monastery (given to Asser by King Alfred)
Axe (tidal) R. and (Axwater)
Mendips
To Cornwall
Porlock
Minehead
Mouth of Parret
Wecet or Watchet
Cymwich Castle
+Wells (No bishopric temp. Alfred)
Glaston's Isle (Abbey laid waste by Danes temp. Alfred)
Tidal Rivers and Flooded Moors (with Eyots or Camps) navigable to Ilchester
R. Parret
R. Plunton
(tidal river)
Exmoor (part of)
Canbk' Foresta
Ancient Dumnonia
+Lidyard (given to Asser by Edward)
+Taunton
+Athelney Abbey Llongborth (Longport)
+Somerton
Roman
DEVONSHIRE
+Wellington (given to Asser by Edward)
+Ilchester or Ischalis
Shaftesbury Nunnery (founded by Alfred)
WILTS
+Sherborne
Fosse Way
Hounds Hill
Roman Road Dorchester
S. Petherton
DORSET
PART OF ASSER'S EPISCOPAL JURISDICTION,
Circa 900.
Exeter √ about 20 miles outside Somerset.

tonsure and refused to adopt the Latin form as being an admission of the supremacy of the Latin Church.[1] Asser was fully aware of this and his co-operation was given to the king on the condition that there was to be no sacrifice of principle. Indeed, the appointment of Welsh Bishops and Archbishops was made by the clergy of Wales themselves, as Bishop Godwin points out, until Bernard, a Norman, chaplain to Henry I, was consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, July 12th, 1115.

The same theory of Celtic independence of Canterbury is maintained by Giraldus Cambrensis in his "de jure ac statu menevensis Ecclesiæ," but, as a Norman partly, Giraldus was not reluctant to introduce Rome as a factor, or, indeed, as an arbitrator to decide a disputed point in favour of himself. But, three hundred years before this, the idea of the Roman Pontiff exercising any power of appointing bishops at the "Sedes Menevensis" was never contemplated or put into practice. Asser was thoroughly independent of Rome, and King Alfred, by working in and through Asser, was also independent. He therefore turned to Rheims and not Rome.

Another phrase and expression of opinion made by Fulco to King Alfred is worth noticing when he writes: "And since you desire the restitution of religion and ecclesiastical order to be made by our aid and from our seat at Rheims this must be owing to divine instigation. Just as the 'gens Francorum' were freed from error by blessed Saint Remigius, Francorum Apostolus, so by the same instrumentality the 'gens Anglorum' may be led into the right path by his means (*ex sede illius et doctrina*)."

Fulco mentions St. Augustine but acknowledges that his mission had been incomplete and much of it unfulfilled.

Some of these questions may seem to be remote after the interval of 1000 years, especially those touching the status of the "Menevensis Ecclesia" and the Episcopal Church in Wales. But the modern and recent independence of the Welsh Church, under its own archbishopric, independent of Canterbury, may remind us that this question anyhow has

1. *See* "The Celtic Church of Wales," by J. W. Willis Bund, p. 277.

had a very long history and that really the Archbishopric of Menevia, once the "Archbishopric of Caerleon," is the most ancient "Bishop's settle" in these Islands. It reveals the most conspicuous feature of a Celtic missionary movement.

In a well-known letter addressed by S. Winfred or Boniface to Bishop Daniel, of Winchester (704–745),[1] the great Apostle of Germany seeks advice. He wished to get protection and help at the Court of France in his missionary labours, "for without the assistance of the King of the French, I can govern neither the people nor the Priests and Deacons nor Monks nor Nuns . . . But if I go to his Court to ask help under the present circumstances I am unable to abstain bodily from the communion of such men according to the canons. I remember at the time of my ordination, I swore, according to the Mandate of Pope Gregory (II) by the body of Peter to avoid the communion of such men, unless I should be able to turn them into the true Canonical path. But again I fear a greater evil as regards the preaching I am bound to fulfil to the people, if I do not go to the King of the French." Such was the dilemma in which the great Apostle was placed by the exclusiveness of Rome. Such an attitude was scarcely beneficial to missionary effort.

The missionary work of continental conversion was known and sympathised with, not only at Winchester—but also at Glaston. Amongst the epistles of St. Boniface there exists a letter (No. 55) from St. Wigbert, a West Saxon, who was called by St. Boniface himself to work amongst "the Pagans, Hessians and Saxons." Apparently he had been a Glaston Monk, for his letter is addressed "To his holy masters, the fathers and brethren beloved in Christ," there he says: "You know, brethren, that no distance of country can separate those who are united in the bonds of charity; therefore I still have a share in your prayers . . . It is dangerous and laborious to live in hunger and thirst and cold amongst the Pagans—therefore I beg of you earnestly to pray that God would put His words in our mouth that we may bring forth fruit. Salute the brethren, particularly the Abbott Ingeld

1. *See* Bonifacii Opera, by J. A. Giles, 1844.

(Cengill ? 729) and our congregation and acquaint my Mother Tettan and her congregation with my prosperous journey."

Tetta was Abbess of Wimborne and a West Saxon by birth[1] and she trained up many women missionaries who went to help Boniface amongst the Hessians and Thuringians, amongst them St. Lioba who was Abbess of Bischofsheim ; St. Tecla, at Kitzingen upon the Main ; St. Walburga, sister of the missionary saints, Willibald and Winibald, in the same country ; Kynetrude, who was sent into Bavaria ; Kynegild, a widow, aunt to St. Lullus, (successor of Boniface in the See of Metz), with her daughter, appointed as Abbess in Thuringia. The name of St. Tecla, kinswoman of Tetta, Abbess of Wimborne, is preserved in a rock in the Severn Sea. Indeed, the number of men and women missionaries who went from Wessex to convert the Hessians, Thuringians and Saxons, points to some especial Wessex age of enthusiasm in the eighth century. It was a kind of spiritual repercussion acting from the Saxons of England upon the Saxons and pagans of the Continent and is really very notable. Such a centre as Glaston was a nursery of this spiritual emotion, and proves again and again the spiritual debt in past times owed by the Continent to the British Isles. This enthusiasm and emotion was indigenous and owed little to Rome and the Roman pontiffs. It helps to explain also that passage in the " Life of Alfred " written by Bishop Asser when, amongst the loyal well-wishers of the great king, he included " many Franks, Frisians and Gauls, pagans " as well as " Britons, Scots and Armoricans "—(in Brittany). The wonderful zeal of women missionaries in the eighth century, many of noble birth, is a feature in itself. Perhaps the work of Saxon abbesses in Germany suggested to the great King Alfred his idea of Shaftesbury Abbey where his own daughter ruled. Wimborne Minster was founded by St. Cuthberga, sister to King Ina and sister also to Quenburga, who helped on the task of foundation (A.D. 713). Wimborne Minster was on the way to Poole Harbour and Wareham and along this route, as well as to " Hamble Haven " in Southampton Water, many parties of Saxon pilgrims and missionaries

1. Dr. Challoner's " Britannia Sancta."

must have found their way to the Continent. Having received the light of Christianity through the Celtic Church, the Saxons of Wessex, both men and women, were desirous of passing it on to the Saxons of Old Saxony as well as to the savage tribes surrounding them. This chapter of English missionary zeal has had far too little attention paid it.

It may be a matter of curiosity to discover under what Rule the many Abbesses of the eighth century conducted their congregations. Many of them, being of Royal extraction, would think themselves qualified, it might be thought, to impose their own discipline. It could hardly be the Rule of St. Benedict or, indeed, any modification of it. Nor would these eighth-century institutions resemble such a place as the Mynchin Buckland Priory (Buckland Sororum), one of the commandries of the order of St. John of Jerusalem, that existed in North Petherton in Somerset: nor, indeed, would it be like Cannington Nunnery. Possibly these Saxon institutions were places of retreat where married women, like King Ina's queen, lived a life of good works, contemplation and retreat. Barking, in Essex, was one of the earliest. But the whole question is very interesting and points again and again to the importance of the eighth and ninth century in the annals of the church and in the unfolding of Christianity.

During the ninth century and in the lifetime of King Alfred, measures were adopted at Rome and endorsed by the popes then reigning, which had the utmost influence, not only upon current politics but upon the shaping of history subsequently. Indeed we seem able to place our fingers in these years upon the very seed plot of world-wide Papal ambitions. The most daring and, at the same time, the most successful act which helped to place the Papal yoke upon mediæval Christendom was the deliberate forgery of Papal "Decretals." Both Dean Milman and Dean Hook, amongst many other learned commentators of this crucial period, emphasise the importance of this forgery, although they do not seem able to trace it back to a single hand. Some associate the name of Isidore Mercator with it.

The "Decretals," originally, were the letters, or edicts of the Bishops of Rome beginning with Pope Siricius towards

the close of the fourth century. They were in reality a number of precedents and considered decisions given by contemporary Bishops of Rome forming a code of proceedings and, indeed, a kind of digest of ecclesiastical law for the guidance of episcopal rulers generally speaking. In and by themselves the "Decretals" may have been comparatively harmless and have served to guide the judgment of those who in remote regions wished to appeal to some central tribunal. That such a volume of ecclesiastical precedents should come from Rome as the heir of Roman law and Roman proceedings in lay jurisdiction is not to be wondered at, and, indeed, from one point of view, was much what we might have expected.

But, suddenly, in the ninth century, a whole additional series of decretals wherein the ancient popes were made to speak and act according to the highest pretences *long after their times*, was launched upon the ecclesiastical world. To use Dean Milman's words, they comprehend the whole dogmatic system and discipline of the Roman Church from top to bottom. They lay down the law in letter and precept about the Sacraments and their interpretation; about fasts and festivals; the chrism; holy water; church consecrations; sacred vessels and habiliments. A leading motive of the false decretals was a desire not to be satisfied with the decisions and policy, say, of Leo the Great, or of Innocent the Great or Siricius, but in the spirit of pure invention to go back to the immediate successors of St. Peter himself, piling up precedent upon precedent, which had no existence or reality outside the monastic scriptorium. These decretals established the sole legislative power of the Pope and the Papacy became a legislative as well as an administrative authority. "Infallibility" was the last and logical conclusion, a word with which, after a thousand years, the nineteenth century was made familiar.

It was impossible that King Alfred should have been ignorant of the "False Decretals" and their meaning. His friend, the learned Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, must have known about their fabrication although, as Dean Milman points out, he was caught by them on a question of appeal.[1]

1. "History of Latin Christianity," vol. iii, pp. 190–7.

If King Alfred had allowed his judgment to have been enmeshed by the False Decretals, he would hardly have given his mancuses to St. Peter and St. Paul or despatched a special messenger or legate to the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Then, what of Archbishop Asser, the acknowledged head of the Celtic Church! Was Asser, the descendant of the line of Welsh bishops assembled in A.D. 601 at St. Augustine's Oak, likely to submit absolutely and entirely on all matters of discipline to the Pope of the day who, even at Domesday was simply called "Episcopus" (1086). But if Alfred the truth teller (*veredicus*), and according to Asser "the most pious Ruler of all Christians in the Island of Britain" knew the origin of the False Decretals, was it likely that he would welcome an appeal to Rome on any point? Was this the "Rock" on which Christianity was to be founded? Surely it was sand only! The marvel is that the superstructure has remained for centuries like a castle hung in mid-air. If, again, there was only one Papal Chair and one Occupant, with a single channel of Divine grace, what became of the appeal to pilgrims and worshippers who travelled from the ends of the world "ad limina Apostolorum," namely SS. Peter and Paul. According to the decretals there could only be one "Apostolus," *i.e.* but one Pope, and by logical reasoning one chair only.

Between Rome and Rheims there was not always accord and Rheims did not submit to the real or assumed autocracy of the Bishop of Rome. Dean Milman points out that in 870 there was disagreement bewteen Hincmar, the learned Archbishop of Rheims and Pope Hadrian II (867–872) during the lifetime of King Alfred. Charles the Bald, King of the Franks and son of Judith, Alfred's mother-in-law, had seized the kingdom of Lothair and had incurred the wrath of Hadrian, who had interfered with the disposal of this kingdom, a matter certainly beyond his spiritual jurisdiction.[1] Hadrian took the view that the conflict was not simply one about succession but "against the sons of Belial the enemies of the Christian Faith," an "ex-parte" judgment. Hincmar was told to break off all communion with Charles but he refused, and, in

1. Milman's "History of Latin Christianity," vol. iii, p. 203.

Dean Milman's words, " threw his preponderating weight into the scale in favour of the independence and consolidation of France and its absolute severance from the kingdom of Italy which seemed associated with the Empire."

Hincmar pointed out to Hadrian that he could not be both king and bishop, disposing of kingdoms as he wished.

Nearly two hundred years after this Leo IX (1049) was asked to consecrate the newly built Cathedral of Rheims on October 3rd, the day of St. Remigius, and upon this occasion at a Council held at Rheims Leo IX took the occasion to enunciate a papal axiom that no bishop could call himself apostolic excepting the Pope at Rome. Rheims was a very significant place at which to assert this papal formula. Was it from this quarter that protests against absolutism at Rome were feared ? If this epoch of Latin Christianity were carefully explored it might be found not only that there was a " rift in the lute " but an actual parting of ways before the imperious Hildebrand, Gregory VII, (1073–1086), made his notable contributions towards the theory of the supremacy of St. Peter's chair at Rome. We may remember also that during the period of the so-called Babylonian captivity Avignon was the seat of popes who issued their own decrees independent of Rome (A.D. 1316).

It may be noticed here how Archbishop Wake (1717–1720) in his well-known project of union between the Gallican and Anglican Churches, defined the position of the Gallican Church with its roots far back in history. " While admitting that the true theory of a Christendom on earth is that of a body with many members and but one Head, (Jesus Christ) it denies that in any earthly head there resides despotic authority over the whole. The government of the church in this world is not an absolute, but a limited monarchy : a monarchy which, in fact, is still so far an aristocracy that the monarch is rather ' primus inter pares ' than a Lord Paramount." This, it must be remembered, is the conception of a Universal Church formed by a Gallican, one who recognises the Pope as a Bishop of Rome, a " primus inter pares," if you like, by prestige, but not vested with absolute power.[1] Perhaps in

1. *See* " Archbishop Wake," by J. H. Lupton, B.D., 1896.

this particular question, the position may be best understood if we say that Christianity is best represented by a "Federation of Churches," each working within its own sphere. The analogy of the British Empire may assist us here where the visible Head is the Crown. Herein is a deep and wide matter touching at the base our conception of Church government. But the federation view is not the Ultramontane view of Church government.

Continental rivalries and ideals have died hard. Indeed we might almost ask the pertinent question whether, during the recent Great War, Rome sympathised as she ought with Rheims. When the magnificent cathedral was the target of the Huns' artillery and that pile, consecrated by Hadrian, was being destroyed and the tomb of St. Remigius himself was torn open, so it was said, by the shells of the enemy, and Cardinal Mercier stood in the breach, did the Pope of Rome, from the standpoint long assumed and taken by him as Head of the Church, the successor of St. Peter and the "Vicegerent of God on earth," come to the rescue with anathema or with the fulmination of these spiritual weapons upon which for so many centuries the Church at Rome had relied? The contrary almost seemed to be the case and to the world's observers Rome's spiritual menaces to the savage conqueror (as he then seemed to be) were wholly wanting. But if excommunication by Bell, Book and Candle was real, why was it not hurled at once and for ever at the pagan and heathen desecrator of holy places? The whole Christian world would have applauded it as a Christian assertion of "Right over Might." No more convincing and spectacular championship of morality could have been made.

However this may be, and these questions have an age-long and recurrent history, we are more concerned at the present about King Alfred's church sympathies, in the ninth century partly continental, it is true, because he himself could not dissociate himself from them in the dynastic sense, but mainly insular and Celtic. Not that the two sets of sympathies were opposed to one another, but taken together, they combined to give that œcumenical view that seems to have recommended itself to that wonderful world view of

politics and religion taken by Alfred, that "most Christian" king, as Fulco called him. The popes bestowed upon the kings of France the title of "Most Christian" as they bestowed upon the kings of Spain the title of "Most Catholic," on condition of their subservience to the "Holy See." King Alfred's title was earned by his own example and his own honourable functions as a really Christian ruler, and he sought the world for teachers and men of learning to help him, himself "Venerabilis piissimusque Omnium Britanniæ insulæ Christianorum Rector."

In his "England before the Conquest" (p. 477) Sir Charles Oman, in commenting on the appointment of Asser as Bishop of Sherborne (892), John of Saxony as Abbot of Athelney: and Grimbald (*Flandrensis quidam*) of the monastery of Bertin, as Abbot of the new Minster at Winchester: notices how from this little band of men of letters, including of course the Mercians and Plegmund, Archbishop of Canterbury (890–914), Werfrith, Bishop of Worcester (873–915), with Athelstan and Werwulf, King Alfred's chaplains, there arose in England "a body of learned clergy," a true beginning of the life of the nation.

The fortunes of Flanders and the Low Countries, whether we interpret the geographical term in a wide or restricted sense, have been most intimately bound up with those of our own country since the days of King Alfred. The king's own daughter, Elftrytha a younger sister of Elgiva, the Abbess of Shaftesbury, married Baldwin II, Count of Flanders, from which union was descended in due course Matilda, the wife of William the Conqueror and daughter of another Baldwin. Many "Flandrenses" came over to assist in the Conquest—according to Giraldus Cambrensis they were a brave and robust race and adventurers by sea and land, which agrees with Caesar's description of the Belgae as being a "gens fortissima" in Gaul. Giraldus says moreover that they were wool merchants, weavers and traders (*gens lanificiis, gens mercimoniis usitatissima*) a description of them that has lasted through history. In return for the help given to the Conqueror by Baldwin and the Flemings an agreement ran that King William should always pay three hundred marcs to the Counts

of Flanders. But the Flandrenses swarmed over in such numbers that Henry I found them troublesome and a dispute arose between him and Robert, Count of Flanders. The tribute was stopped and the Flandrenses turned out of England and settled as a Colony in Rossia, a province of Demetia, to be a kind of garrison in South Wales against the Welsh, where for long they preserved their life and language apart from the Cambrenses around them.[1] Flemingston or Flimston in Glamorgan, so called from Sir John Fleming, one of Fitzhamon's knights, tells its own story. Bridgwater, once Bruge or Bridge, became the possession of Walter de Douai, one of King William's followers: men of Ghent, the metropolis of the Flemings, were found at Bristol, where Gaunt's hospital arose with one of its endowments, still called "Gant's Farm" on the banks of the river Parret. Flemish and Walloon weavers brought their trade and industry to the Abbey of Glaston itself, under the leadership of the Duke of Somerset, as followers of the Reformation, being driven out of the Low Countries by the persecution of Rome and the Spaniards.

When William III came over and the Act of Settlement (1688) was signed there in a dynastic, political and, it may be added, a spiritual sense, the Low Countries and England were united. The thread of association since King Alfred's day may be worth noticing to-day after the world upheaval of the Great War, which has seemed to throw Great Britain and the Netherlands closer together than ever before. Also, it may be remembered that, with the South African Union and with the willing inclusion of the Hollanders and old French Colonists in the British Empire, a new epoch altogether of British consolidation under the British Crown seems to be foreshadowed.

After one thousand years the plains and even the mud and soil of Flanders recall both ancient and modern conflicts. French Flanders has been swept, time after time, by the devastating tides of war backwards and forwards. It is an old story for, as long ago as 451, the Campi Catalaunii of the ancients and the banks of the Marne, as Creasy points out in

1. "Itinerary of Cambria by Giraldus Cambrensis," edited by David Powell, 1580.

his "Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World," were held by Attila and his Huns. The grassy mounds and trenches revealed to Creasy's eye, even at that great distance of time, the Camp of "The Scourge of God." To-day there are deeper scars of war, with all the unfathomable horrors of modern artillery, such indeed as Milton imagined and put in the mouth of Satan, who conceived an evil thought how the earth, otherwise beauteous, could, by its own chemistry, be made to yield "spirituous and fiery spume"—

> Shall yield us, pregnant with infernal flame
> Then into hollow engines, long and round,
> Thick-rammed at the other bore with touch of fire
> Dilated and infuriate, shall send forth
> From far, with thundering noise, among our foes,
> Such implements of mischief as shall dash
> To pieces and o'erwhelm whatever stands
> Adverse.
>
> *Paradise Lost*, vol. vi.

A truly wonderful Miltonic forecast of great guns described by Ariosto in his Orlando Furioso (Cant. 9, Stanza 28) as inventions of the Devil.

To-day there sprang into being, as if to keep alive the idea of the "Scourge of God" a Prince Eitel (*Attila*) of ill-omened parentage and of a savage and unchristian name. To-day the Continental conflict is over, but some lessons abide. Just lately the meek sisterhood of the Convent of Maredret in Belgium have reproduced an illuminated manuscript of Cardinal Mercier's Pastoral, and, in it, the fallen angels in the fight with St. Michael, (the Archangel and the Avenger of God), wear the Prussian Pickelhaube.

Tours on the Loire brings back memories of another sort when in 732 the Mohammedan hosts were swept back from Europe. At Tours lived St. Martin the soldier saint of Gaul (317–397) and it was on his day, November 11th, that King Alfred began his "Enchiridion" or sacred manual of Christian Faith, so Asser tells us. On November 11th, 1918, the end of the Great War against the modern Huns was celebrated by services in all our Christian churches. Time reveals curious coincidences and it is upon this day in truth that French and British can truly and fully fraternise.

Thrones on the Continent tremble and fall, one after another. King Alfred saw the broken empire of Charlemagne, one thousand years ago. As he hunted in Cornwall and prayed at the lonely shrine of St. Guerir, as we know he did, he surely thought and knew the secret of true sovereignty, *i.e.* the fulfilment of God's law. Franks and Frisians, Gauls, Scots and Armoricans willingly sought his protection, as we have already noted. Ancient Cornugallia, now the Duchy of Cornwall, itself a little principality at the time when the "Battle of Chalons" was fought against Attila, was fashioned in the womb of time to be a "membrum" of the more powerful Wessex. Athelstan, King Alfred's grandson, aspired to that more extended Kingdom of the Seas and that old dominion over wandering "Celtica." Roman "Dumnonia" presently lived again with a wider meaning. The Rex Britanniae became the Rex Britanniarum, until we see from the image and superscription of a penny of to-day how far the title spreads.

That Arthurian Realm and those Cornish legends, fanciful and romantic as they appear to the eye and judgment of the literal historian, seem to mean something more than the baseless fabric of a dream. The humble Duchy of Cornwall, small membrum as it is of a mighty Sovereignty, has surely been granted a larger corporate life and existence than the grandiose "Holy Roman Empire" with an Emperor on one side to support it with the carnal arm and a Pope on the other to blight or to destroy with the spiritual weapons of Bulls and Excommunications.

Chapter VI.

The Founding of Taunton.

HERE are few towns of importance in Wessex about the beginnings of which we have such clear evidence in Anglo-Saxon times as Taunton. The entry in the A. S. Chronicle runs as follows: "A.D. 722. This year Queen Ethelburga razed Taunton which Ina had previously built," a very tantalising entry from its mere brevity—Ethelburga was Ina's Queen and the reasons for destroying a town recently built by her husband do not appear. We can only conclude that Taunton was a seat of rebellion against Ina, affairs in Wessex during the first stages of Saxon Conquest not being on a stable footing. The Saxon Princes were fighting amongst themselves and in 733 we read in the A. S. Chronicle how Ethelbald conquered Somerton, a town associated with Ina's rule and occupation. Throughout West Somerset and in the Valley of the Parret King Ina's name was well-known from A.D. 688 when he succeeded to the Kingdom of the West Saxons and held it thirty-seven years. He built the Minster at Glaston: he was a great benefactor of the abbey, as the charters attributed to him reveal: he is associated with the foundation of the Church at Wells, not perhaps as a Cathedral Church: his kinsman, Bishop Aldhelm, was Bishop of Sherborne when he died in 709. As a direct descendant of Cerdic, Cynric and Ceawlin, Ina carried on and completed the conquest of West Somerset. He and Nun, his kinsman, fought against Gerent, King of the Waelas (A.D. 710). But he also fought against the South Saxons and slew Ealdbert the Etheling (A.D. 725). We can understand his battles against the Waelas whom Kentwine had driven to the sea in 682 and thus obtained a mastery over

the Quantocks and Lower Parret, but Ina's contests with the Saxons are not so easy to follow, as they present the aspect of a species of Civil War. However this may be, King Ina ends a notable career by relinquishing his Crown and going to Rome, there to live the life of a monk.

The reason why King Ina gave up his Crown and retreated to Rome can be found in the spirit and temper of the times in which he lived. In this particular instance Queen Ethelburga provided a stimulus. The story goes that the Queen being a very devout woman, earnestly desired the King to take the fateful step of self-abnegation, but that he halted at the gates of enterprise.

"On a certain time, being in their Country Palace (perhaps Taunton or S. Petherton ?) where a Royal Court was kept with extreme magnificence, as soon as they were gone from thence, the Keepers of the house, by the Queen's private order, defiled all the rooms of the Palace with rubbish and the dung of cattle : yea in the bed where the King and Queen had slept they put a sow with a litter of young pigs. In the meantime, when the Court had proceeded a little more than a mile the Queen importuned the King to return to the same Palace, as if it imported even her own life. The King with no great difficulty was persuaded but when he found his Palace, which he had left magnificently adorned, now become so ugly and nasty, he wondered at it and turning his eyes to the Queen, seemed to ask the reason of the change. She, taking advantage of this occasion, with a smiling look said to him, 'Sir, where are now the magnificent purple tapestries ? Where are the many vessels of gold and silver ? Where the luxurious banquet for which sea and land were searched ? Are not all these vanished away like smoke and wind ? But woe to those who fix their minds on such vanities, for they likewise shall be snatched away with them. The more powerful we are the more powerful will our torments be unless we provide in time for our eternal state.' To this purpose she spoke with such efficiency that by this emblem she drew her husband's mind to perform what for many years together she could not obtain by her persuasions."

It was thus, therefore, that King Ina was persuaded to

make his last pilgrimage to Rome and Ethelburga herself entered the monastical state and became an Abbess.

The force of example, also, may have weighed with King Ina, for his predecessor, King Caedwalla quitted his crown in 689 and went to Rome to be baptized by Pope Sergius. Here he died, being still in his white baptismal garment, and a memorial and epitaph were inscribed to his memory by the Pope's command, who had given him also the name of Peter. At one time of his career Caedwalla had been a pagan and an outlaw in the Forest of Anderida. Serenus Cressy, a church historian, writes thus of him: "In the year of Grace, 688, Caedwalla, who had hitherto acted the Lion's part, now divested himself of his natural fierceness, entertaining thoughts of meekness and humility though he was a victorious King and withal young, full of spirit and vigour. Yet he made choice to show himself the servant of Christ."

The difference of attitude adopted by King Ina and King Alfred, respectively, towards Rome is very striking and deserves separate historical treatment. During the interval of 200 years which had elapsed between the reigns of these kings, Rome had, as Dean Milman has shown, lost much of her spiritual vision and had become more and more worldly. Those "False Decretals" must have exposed a system of dishonesty. King Ina knew nothing about them: King Alfred must have been aware of their nature, and there was enough to condemn Papal Rule.

Meanwhile, during the 200 years the Celtic and Dumnonian Church had been especially busy as a simple missionary and proselytising church everywhere. Dumnonia had sent forth from "Isca Domnoniorum" (Exeter), or as some say, from Axbridge, the great St. Winfred (Boniface) as the apostle of Germany. Glaston and Winchester were the spiritual homes of Boniface. Just as really we may suppose they were to King Ina himself, who had rebuilt the church at Glaston and so generously endowed it. Dr. Lingard, the Roman Catholic historian, notes how British and Celtic influences were felt everywhere. Alcuin makes a flattering allusion to the Library of Archbishop Egbert of York, and thinks that such a garden of "flores Britanniæ" should not be shut up in York.

(Lingard's "History," vol. i, 164). All things considered, King Alfred, in 879, must have preferred to work out his own ideals in Church and State, and so to found his great Thanksgiving Abbey at Athelney on lines of his own. King Alfred came before Armoricans, Frisians, Hessians, Scots on his own merits as a just and valiant king, not bearing a "testamur" from Rome. Ina and Caedwalla closed their eyes in the "Eternal City," without Alfred's knowledge and without his fame and destiny.

To come to the founding of Taunton, when King Ina began the town it is more than likely that he held before him the obvious advantages of a site that was not only fertile in itself, but also admirably situated for water-communication with the sea and also with many landing-places in the Parret Valley. The proximity of so much timber and forest wealth found in North Petherton forest, renowned for its oaks; also in Neroche forest and "Cantucudu," (the "Famosa silva" of the Quantocks), by which the Forest of Cantok, or Quantock, was known in Saxon times, all contributed to favour the design of erecting a town. Other considerations contributed to emphasise the importance of this exact locality. Somewhere or other in this Western Peninsula, as the tide of Saxon conquest went on, it was necessary to erect and maintain a frontier town with a castle for the purpose either of offence or defence. Here we take it was the strategic beginning of Taunton Castle.

In the history of Taunton the Parret is important because it was through the Parret mouth and Bruge (afterwards Bridgwater) that access could be gained to the sea. If, as William of Worcester says, Comwich of old was the port of Bridgwater, it was really also the port of Taunton, *via* the Parret and Tone by Borough Bridge. In modern times we know a canal was dug to facilitate water carriage between Bridgwater and Taunton; but, in very early days, when river boats were small and their draught was shallow, the river Tone sufficed. The work of inland communication over and through the Parret Valley was well understood by the Glaston monks. It should be noted also that through the tidal Parret, *via* Borough Bridge, the way was clear to Langport from Taunton. The "Creeks," "Hythes" and innumerable "Pills," where re-

fluent and tidal waters flowed, still survive in place-names as Crowpille near Bridgwater, Creech Barrow, near Taunton and Creech St. Michael and so on.

We have a hint of the methods of Saxon settlement and especially that of King Ina in an account of the victorious progress upon the Polden Hills before (as we may suppose) he actually founded Taunton (*c.* 700). This hint is contained in a legendary story relating to the martyrdom of St. Indractus[1]. It appears that this saint, or son of an Irish chieftain, together with his sister Drusa or St. Dominica, had been on a pilgrimage to Rome and on their return came to pray at St. Patrick's tomb at Glaston. Hona, a son of iniquity, thinking Indractus and his sister had money with them, murdered them and threw them down a well at Shapwick. The spot was miraculously revealed to King Ina who was then living on the Poldens with his followers scattered around him in little hamlets (*in villulis*). A column of fire reaching from earth to heaven revealed the well down which the bodies were thrown. Ina rescued the bodies and buried them at Glaston opposite the grave of St. Patrick. Whatever we may think of the story of Indractus and his sister, the picture given here of the settlement of King Ina and his followers is instructive as this, anyhow, would not be invented and it shews how the progress of Saxon rule began in the conquered land of the "Waelas." The chief would occupy some central spot and the homesteads in the vicinity would be occupied by followers and in due course of time the "Villulae" would become "villages" or manors (*manentes*). When King Ina first built his castle on the Tone at Taunton, the surrounding district would gradually come under minor Saxon chiefs and leaders. Sometimes "Norton Fitz Warren" is said to have been an earlier "Ton" than Taunton itself but how do we account for "North-Ton," the derivation, surely, of Norton, *i.e.* the "Ton" north of Taunton? What probably is true is that there was an earlier British or Waelas fort and stronghold at Norton Camp before Kentwine or Ina reached the Quantocks.

We are upon more sure ground historically if we follow

1. Colgan's Works, vol. iv, Hist. MSS. Commission, pp. 610, 611.

Freeman and suppose with him that the way to Taunton and to the Vale of Taunton Deane was paved in some measure by Kentwine (A.D. 685). Freeman writes: "Kentwine's victory made the English masters of Quantock, as Ceawlin's victory, 100 years before, had made them masters of Mendip . . . In this campaign I conceive that the Saxons won Bridgwater and Watchet and we may, I think, venture to picture Kentwine as forcing the gate, *i.e.* the Lydeard . . . and driving the Welsh up the Valley, where, in after days, Crowcombe was given to St. Swithun's Church at Winchester for the soul of Godwin by his mother Gytha."

An interesting question arises: "Did Kentwine reach the Quantocks and so the Vale of Taunton by the Upper or Lower Parret?" It seems more than probable that he, and Ina after him, advanced by way of Comwich and the Lower Parret along the line of the great Saxon "Herepath," the course of which will be presently described from Bristol across the Parret to Exmoor by way of the Quantocks. Kenwalch (d. 676) had preceded Kentwine and fighting against the Welsh at Peonna (658), *i.e.* Pen Selwood, had driven them "as far as Pedrida," *i.e.* the Parret. King Ina, following after Kenwalch and Kentwine, added to and completed the Saxon Conquest of West Somerset. It may be noted that Kenwalch's military exploit, beginning at Pen Selwood and not far from "Egbricht's Stone" then ending at the Lower Parret down the Polden range, resembles King Alfred's subsequent and supreme effort by which he concentrated at Selwood and then rushed down the Poldens to Edington, finally capturing Guthrum in the fort of "Viking's-pill," near Pawlet. This we take it was the climax of the fateful campaign against the Danes in 878. Military strokes on a certain "terrain" very often repeat themselves.

Freeman has suggested that Somerton and the especial region of the "Summurtunenis paga," was that part of Wessex which Cenred, Ina's father, had governed as "regulus" or under-king. There always seems a doubt whether Ina was king by true succession or by choice of the elders and this doubt is enshrined in a legend quoted by Freeman.[1] When,

1. *Proceedings*, Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. xviiii, pp. 18–19.

the throne of Southern Britain being vacant, men were sent to find some one called Ina—they travelled to Devon and Cornwall, but in vain, and they turned their faces towards London. But on the way they passed by Somerton. There they chanced to hear a churl, as he tilled his field, shout loudly for Ina to bring his father's oxen. The youth presently showed himself, of a goodly countenance, strong and manly. So he was taken by the elders and in due time married to Æthelburga, who at first objected to him as the son of a churl, but afterwards was fascinated by his kingly appearance.

Freeman rejects most of the story as poetical and fantastic, as Ina was no churl's son but an "Ætheling." At any rate the pretty story fitted in with the remark of William of Malmesbury[1] that although Ina was of Royal descent he was chosen less on account of his birth than on account of his personal qualities.

We must leave the question of the comparative importance of Somerton and Taunton in the eyes of King Ina as undecided. The question of a capital and administrating town of Somerset has always been rather a puzzle. This might be expected with Bath and Bristol on its north-east borders; with Sherborne, the seat of the old Bishopric on the eastern border. At any rate, we may perhaps conclude safely that if Somerton preceded Taunton as a seat of Saxon power, the advance on Taunton by the Quantocks would have strengthened its position with reference to Devonshire beyond.

In Norman and Plantagenet times the Itinerant Justices held Forests Courts very often at Somerton and the Castle there was built in Saxon times; already noted as being "walled and embattled" in King Alfred's day. It had also a County gaol, although this distinction sometimes belonged to Ilchester, which was certainly a strong place on the Fossway held by the Romans in early times of British history.

In "Somerset Historical Essays" Dr. Armitage Robinson has the following note on Æthelheard, the successor of King Ina, who as new King of Wessex had trouble with a rival called Oswald who died in 730. Then in 733 Æthelbald of

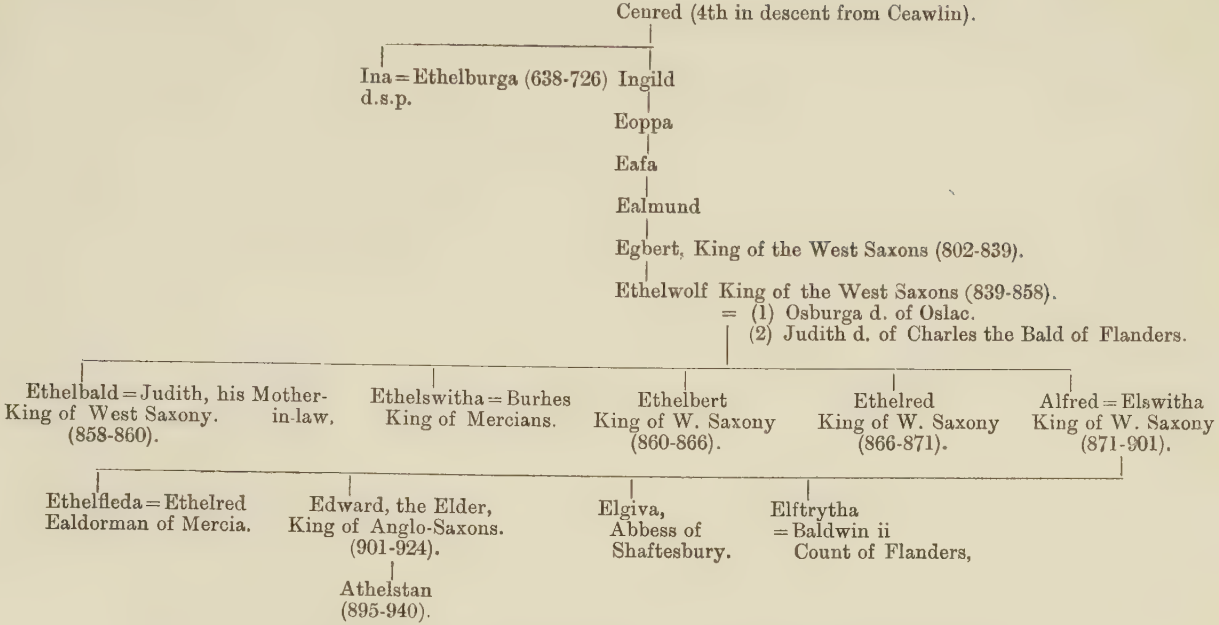
1. Gesta Regum.

Mercia descended upon Æthelheard and forcing his way west harried Somerton. "Cuthred succeeded Æthelheard in 740 and we are told he fought boldly with Æthelbald and again in 752 he fought at Beorgfeorda against him and put him to flight. The next year he fought with the Welsh but whether Taunton was now rebuilt we cannot tell." It is quite possible, however, that Taunton Castle and fort may have been a convenient centre for Cuthred.

King Ina and Ethelburga had no children and the line was continued through Ina's brother Ingild, the forefather of Egbert and King Alfred.

In Spelman's "Concilia" (vol. i, p. 219) King Ina is said to have summoned a Council of the Bishops and Elders of the Church about mixed marriages between Saxons, British and Scots. According to this Council Ina had married, as a second wife, Guala (*Wallia*) daughter of Cadwalader, king of the Britones and thus obtained the whole of Cambria and the "Coronam benedictam Britanniae." Such unions became popular everywhere and so a race unification made "populum unum per universum regnum Britanniae." Saxons married Britons and Britons or Welsh married Saxons and Angles. All combined to fight most vigorously against the Danes and pirates from Norway. So at least we read in the text of the "Concilia." This story is condemned as Ina is not supposed to have married any other wife but the Saxon Queen Ethelburga. The derivation, also, of "Wallia" from the supposed "Guala" is obviously strained. Still some truth about the fusion of the two races, Saxons and British, may underlie the proceedings of this Council which was held to prevent illicit and promiscuous intercourse between the two races. (*Ad delendam fornicationem.*) It is just possible also that some doubt of the legality of "morganatic" marriages may have passed through the minds of the Saxon Chiefs and Kings. At any rate the whole question needed some Church regularisation and, moreover, there was something behind the phrase "Benedictam Coronam Britanniae," a heritage not to be despised and from its antiquity, to be embraced by the Saxons who, after all, were, in a sense, "Novi homines." An ancient Dynasty, going back perhaps to Romano-British times had

WEST SAXON KINGS.


Cenred (4th in descent from Ceawlin).
Ina = Ethelburga (638-726) d.s.p.
Ingild
Eoppa
Eafa
Ealmund
Egbert, King of the West Saxons (802-839).
Ethelwolf King of the West Saxons (839-858).
= (1) Osburga d. of Oslac.
(2) Judith d. of Charles the Bald of Flanders.
Ethelbald = Judith, his Mother-in-law, King of West Saxony. (858-860).
Ethelswitha = Burhes King of Mercians.
Ethelbert King of W. Saxony (860-866).
Ethelred King of W. Saxony (866-871).
Alfred = Elswitha King of W. Saxony (871-901).
Ethelfleda = Ethelred Ealdorman of Mercia.
Edward, the Elder, King of Anglo-Saxons. (901-924).
Athelstan (895-940).
Elgiva, Abbess of Shaftesbury.
Elftrytha = Baldwin ii Count of Flanders,

its own prestige and would contribute to the status even of the West Saxon kingdoms.

Race fusion went on slowly as the Saxon conquerors advanced westward through West Somerset and Devon. At Exeter, Freeman, in his account of that town,[1] lays emphasis on this and if this was the case at Exeter, we feel sure that it must have been so at Taunton. Probably this phenomena in social life appeared first at Taunton if the Saxons reached this town before Exeter and from what has been already said, this was the case. Freeman evidently thought so but was brought up by the recorded fact that St. Winfrod or Boniface, born in 680 at Crediton, was educated at a Monastery at Exeter (*Adescanceastre*). In this case Freeman thought that, to have a monastery, Exeter must have become English some time before the end of the seventh century.[2]

But there really seems to be some kind of doubt whether "ad escan ceastre" really meant Exeter at all. The "ad escan" may not mean the Exe river but the Axe; and advocates of this view quote a Charter of Bishop Forther, a friend of St. Boniface, mentioned in Boniface's own letters,[3] which left land to Aldberht, head of a "Monasterium prope Fluvium aesce (Axe) 712, not far from the present site of Axbridge and near Bleadon-hythe and a Church of St. Martin the Confessor. There is a difficulty about identifying the spot but if it stood there in 700, it may have been destroyed utterly by the Danes in their frequent forays up the Axe in the ninth century. We are certain that at Cheddar there was a "minster" in very early times which may have been the place, as there was a "Ceoddre minster," alluded to in King William's Charter to Bishop Giso, 1067.[4]

At any rate, if we may conclude that St. Boniface, the famous Apostle of Germany, was educated at Axbridge or Cheddar, close to the famous Monasteria of Banwell and Congresbury, which were the "incunabula" of the Bishopric

1. Historic Towns Series.
2. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. Soc., vol. xviii.
3. Kemble's Charters, vol. lxiii.
4. Hist. MSS. Commission, Wells MSS., vol. i, p. 431.

of Bath and Wells, the historical problem of the Saxon Conquest of Exeter becomes clearer and the way becomes smoother to adopt Freeman's first hypothesis, *viz.* that the conquest of this part of Somerset was made along the north and not the south, *i.e.* by way of the Lower and not the Upper Valley of the Parret—in other words by subduing the highlands of the Quantocks and Brendons first. The approach to Exeter would have been by way of Willet, Williton, Willscombe and Wellington and the Exe Valley, all land of the "Waelas."

There is just one possibility which, apparently, did not suggest itself to Freeman and it is this, that if there was a monasterium at Exeter at which St. Boniface learned his first rudiments of the Christian Faith, it may not necessarily have been English or of the Angli or Saxones. Might it not have been Celtic or Welsh of the Glaston type to begin with? There we may leave this knotty point.

When King Ina had retired to Rome and had left his kingdom to Athelard or Æthelheard, it was Frithogytha, Athelard's Queen who first endowed the See of Winchester with lands in and around Taunton. It does not seem as if, from the genealogies, Athelard was in the direct lineal succession as King of the West Saxons, but he may have been sub-king, or regulus of this particular region. Frithogytha appears to have been the sister-in-law of Ethelburga. The extent of the first grant made by Frithogytha probably included much of what was known as "The Hundred of Taunton Market" or "Borough of Taunton." What was known as the "Infaring Division," commonly called "The Five Hundreds of Taunton-Dean," constituted another division. "The Outfaring Division" was another section of sixteen parishes surrounding Taunton. A rough idea of the whole extent of country falling under Taunton and its Parishes and Hundreds may be got from the description of it in Savage's "History of Taunton." From the perimeter there given in a map, their value may be inferred. The wealth of it is evident from the fact that in 1814–1815 it was calculated to be equal to one-twentieth of the assessment of the whole County of Somerset.

After Frithogytha, the greatest benefactor was Ethelwulf the father of King Alfred. The words of this charter of 854

run thus: "I have enlarged the span of ground in Taunton which Queen "Frithogytha gave in former times."[1] The boundaries are clear up to the present day. That on the north and north-west where the line intersects the Quantocks between Lydeard St. Lawrence, Crowcombe, Bagborough, Aisholt Parishes is still very evident. Place-names such as "Triscombe" occur, and below it a field called "Long Thorn" (the "longa spina" of the Charter) survives: so does "alba gronna" or "White Moor Farm" and Willet and Willet brook. The boundary just about here follows an old roadway which is itself an old boundary of parishes, in fact the old Saxon "Herepath" running westward. More towards the east of the Quantocks and adjoining part of Aisholt and Spaxton Parishes, both outside King Ethelwulf's grant, Bishpool and Holwell, both mentioned, are still easily recognisable. The reason of this magnificent gift is not altogether apparent. It surely strengthened Winchester and seemed to make Taunton a small metropolis by itself in the West and certainly overshadowed Exeter. To begin with, it might have been the best centre for the gradual amalgamation of Saxons and British. As there was a "Welshry" and "Englishry" for a long time at Exeter, (a point to which Freeman draws attention), so, indeed, there might have been the same constituents of races in King Ina's own town. It is possible to adduce "The Customs of Taunton Dean," so long peculiar to the Town and Manor, as a proof of the "Welshry."

Sir Charles Elton in his "Origins of English History" (p. 194) points out that the junior right of inheritance, by which the youngest son succeeds, may, after all, be only a survival of the laws of the Welsh Hoel the Good, such as are found in the Dimetian Code for South Wales and in the Venedotian Code for Gwynnedd (p. 186). If so, in this particular matter, Taunton was more famous for preserving typical Welsh institutions than Exeter. It may be added here that King Alfred himself gave Rinetune or Rimpton, near Yeovil, in 872.[2] In 1053 Githa, the wife of Godwin, gave Crowcombe

1. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. xviii.
2. "Anglia Saxon," vol. i, p. 289.

to Winchester "for the repose of his soul" as she also gave "Bleadon Hythe" on the Axe. The revenues of the "Church of St. Swithun" were thus augmented in West Somerset.

Here we may be tempted to explore a little by-path of our local history and hazard an hypothesis not altogether extravagant, whether the Saxon kings or, indeed, King Alfred himself, could have thought of making an important administrative centre at Taunton. Lying behind Athelney and, indeed, always protected by it, Taunton seems to have escaped the Danish ravages. Almost everywhere else the havoc was complete. London itself lay in ruins and had to be rebuilt by King Alfred as Asser tells us. Winchester had been ravaged: so had Bath and Bristol. Exeter was always exposed from the sea. Taunton, from its position, could be defended more easily than any of these places. The attractions of the neighbourhood and of the adjacent forests with their supplies of game and timber were great. Even King William the Conqueror when, in 1070, he held, according to Florence of Worcester that notable "Witenagemot" at a place called "Pedreda," *i.e.* Petherton, in presence of Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishops, Abbots, Earls and Chiefs of all England, seemed to favour this part of England. The number of King William's personal attendants, who were bound to him by more or less close relations, settled in the neighbourhood, was great. His own brother-in-law, Comes Moritonensis, was at Montacute Castle, not far off. Bishop Walkelyn, the successor of Stigand at Winchester, was the Conqueror's cousin and former chaplain, and ruled all powerful at Taunton; William of Falaise held Stoke Courcy Castle and guarded the mouth of the Parret: William de Mohun held "jura regalia" at Dunster further up the coast.

Amongst the "Servientes Regis," often in close attendance at the King's Court, was Humphrey the Chamberlain with land at Curry, under the king, and also at Babcary, not far from Somerton, where, as Eyton notes, his services may have occasionally been in request.[1] Robert de Auberville's Serjeanty was that of King's Forester at Somerton Park and

1. "Domesday Studies," vol. ii, p. 68.

North Petherton Forest, whence all the Forests were administered.[1] Johannes Ostiarius's Serjeanty was "Usher" to the King's Court and he had land at Wigborough, S. Petherton; Pignes, near Bridgwater; land at Huntstile, Cannington, Perry, Newton in N. Petherton. "Their site and other circumstances suggest that John's functions were apropos to Royal Visitations at North Petherton, South Petherton or Somerton: or, it may be at Cannington if the King ever lodged in his demesne there" (Eyton). Ansger Focarius was "Hearth-Keeper" and had land at Chilton, Michaelchurch, Sheerston, Durleigh, all near Bridgwater and North Petherton. "The site of his estates suggests that the King's Hall at North Petherton may have been his sphere of action" (Eyton).

Ansger, the cook, held Lilstock, not far from Cannington; Anschetel, the park-keeper, held Honybere, near Stoke-Courcy and North Newton in North Petherton, close to Athelney Island.

It may be added that N. Petherton Church had always a "King's Gallery," still a feature of the building. Near Durleigh is West Bower, possibly a royal residence formerly.

Where was the King s Hall in North Petherton, which Mr. Eyton thinks must have existed? Probably it was in North rather than South Petherton, as Eyton suggests, the circumstances seeming to require this. At the date of King William's Great Witenagemot there could not have been many palatial abodes. The Castle at Bridgwater did not exist and, if the Castle at Taunton was available, the meeting was not held there. It may have been that the king held a kind of Itinerant Court, if there was no "Woodstock" to entertain his guests. The most likely place, from its evident antiquity and history, in the neighbourhood, was "West Bur" or "Bower" close to Durleigh, the seat itself of the King's "focarius" or hearth-keeper of Domesday. The king's "coquus" at Lilstock would not have been far off; nor would his butler (*pincerna*) at Stoke Courcy, or, indeed, his chamberlain at Curry.

In Henry VIII's time, Bower was part of the Royal Duchy of Lancaster "of the honour of Trowbridge" in Wilts, a Court of the said Duchy being held at Durleigh.[2] Durleigh

1. Collinson, "History of Somerset," vol. iii, p. 56.

2. "Somerset Chantries": Som. Record Soc., vol. ii, p. 242.

was of some importance the Manor of Horsey being held "as of Durleigh."

In Henry VII's reign, John Seymour, father of Jane Seymour, Queen of Henry VIII, held land in Durleigh " as of the Manor of Lancaster " together with West Bower.[1] Here it is always said Jane Seymour herself was born and it is an undoubted fact that John Seymour, who held Durleigh and the Manor of West Bower, was John Seymour of Wulfall or Wolf Hall in Wilts.

The history of Durleigh Church or Chapel seems also to be of a peculiar nature. Originally it must have been a King's Chapel as it was outside episcopal jurisdiction and in later times, termed " a Donative." Here, therefore, on the borders of North Petherton park and forest, and adjoining a region second to none in the kingdom for fowling as well as hunting, King William may have held his court. It was fairly accessible from all parts of his newly conquered realm, the Severn and Severn Sea affording one line of communication by way of the Parret mouth : the main road (possibly Roman) from Bristol to the Parret giving another ; to say nothing of the line of the old road through Wiltshire to the Polden Hills. The convenience of foregathering there was greater than at first sight might appear. South Wales also was accessible by way of Portskewet (where King Harold had a hunting-lodge) and the old landing-places in Glamorgan. From the west by way of Taunton the road was plain from Exeter.

For many centuries in Taunton the main institution there must have been the priory, existing both in Saxon and Norman times. The Rev. Thomas Hugo has traced its annals in Norman times[2] and we are not concerned here with its history in Norman and subsequent times. This may be gathered from Mr. Hugo's account. But there is one very interesting notice of the prior and of the priory in Saxon times. According to an old charter dated 904, in the reign of Edward the Elder, with the signature of Denewulf, Bishop of Winchester[3] there

1. Inq. p.m., 6 & 7 Henry VII.
2. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. lx.
3. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. lx, p. 22.

was an obligation on the part of the prior to entertain the king on any possible hunting trips westward from Taunton to Williton. In addition to finding entertainment for the king and his suite for one night the prior had to look after and feed eight dogs and their keepers. These dogs would probably have been "Lymers," worked in leashes by the harbourer, used for starting the deer. Then at certain "relays" dogs were coupled up where the deer might possibly run, to be let loose at the right time. In French-Norman phrase the best running dogs were called "raches" or "ratches" or "kennetes." The object of the old hunters was to waylay, shoot and kill whenever possible—very different from the modern custom of turning on a pack, after the harbourer has located a "runnable" deer and then continuing to a finish.[1] In addition to providing for the hunters (*berners*) and their dogs, the Prior of Taunton had to put up the falconers for nine nights together, with attendants, horses and carts when King Edward journeyed from Taunton to Williton, the first stage further West to Exmoor. We have Collinson's authority for saying that, in Saxon times, there existed at Porlock a royal residence and hunting-quarters.

The modern stag hunter, therefore, when he "trains" his hunters down from Taunton to Minehead and so to Porlock, may reflect that he is only following the line of the Saxon hunting progresses over one thousand years ago—so continuous is the tale of sport in West Somerset. The Taunton Priory notice, of a direct kind, about Saxon hunting on the Quantocks (a forest region formerly from Taunton to Williton and Quantockshead), is we believe unique. A parallel notice of Saxon hunting on the Mendips and near the Cheddar Cliffs occurs when King Edmund in pursuit of a stag, was nearly precipitated over Cheddar Gorge. It may, however, be assumed with tolerable certainty that King Alfred, especially during his sojourn at Athelney, hunted on the Quantocks and obtained sustenance for himself and his followers there in his extremity.

1. *See* "Master of Game" and Gaston de Foix's "La Chasse"; also Greswell's "Forests and Deerparks of Somerset," pp. 226–230.

It is probable, also, that food was found for him from that well-known "Porcheria," known as the "Castellum" (now Roborough), in Broomfield parish and close to "Cantock," the original Quantock farm and settlement above Enmore Castle.[1] The "porcheria" was always attached to and rated with "Somerton" as part of the royal property.[2] In early Norman times King John appears to have often hunted at or near Taunton and may have been a guest at the priory itself, perhaps an occupant of Taunton Castle. There are notices on the Roll of the Bishop of Winchester (1208) which point to sojourns in the town and neighbourhood. King John made one visit to the north of the Quantock when in September, 1210, he visited Fitzgerald at Stoke Courcy Castle.[3]

The name of "Denewulf" in the charter to King Edward the Elder and a counter charter of the king to Denewulf naturally prompts the question whether this was the swineherd of King Alfred with whom he concealed himself, and whom he afterwards caused to be educated and raised to the Bishopric of Winchester.[4] There seems to be every reason to believe that it was the same Denewulf in both cases, as the dates agree. Did King Edward found the Priory? Apparently it is spoken of, not as a new foundation in 904, but one already existing. Could King Alfred have founded it at the same time as he founded Athelney Abbey? It had the same dedication to SS. Peter and Paul. In an inquisition of 10 Edw. II, William Gyffard, Bishop of Winchester (1107), is stated to have been the founder "before the time of King Edmund Ironside," obviously an error.

Certainly, Bishop Gyffard was a great benefactor, but it is equally plain that two hundred years before him the priory was a Saxon institution. There has always been a difficulty about Bishop Denewulf, the usual date of his Winchester appointment being 879, the year after King Alfred's victory at Edington. How could the "swineherd" have been edu-

1. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. lvi.
2. Greswell's "Land of Quantock," pp. 50, 59.
3. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. lxvi, p. 114.
4. Codex Dipl: Aevi Saxonici MLXXXII and MLXXXIV.

cated in such a short time ? Might he not have been prior of the Taunton Monasterium to begin with ? Taunton, unswept and unravaged by the Danes, and, perhaps, with books and MSS. untouched, might have been a better place than even Winchester, where the devastation was complete. According to Thomas Rudborne's "Historia Major Wintonensis"[1] there was not a single monk left at Winchester. Moreover, if Alfred collected so many learned folk under John of Saxony at Athelney itself, means of education might have been found at the gates of Taunton also. Of course there is no direct evidence on this point but the surmise is of a fascinating kind. Taunton would then appear as a centre of education.

Education was carried on at Taunton probably in connection with Taunton Priory in the thirteenth century as appears from a release by Bartholomew, clerk of the Castle of Launceston, son of Gilbert de Aqua, late scholar of Taunton. In this deed[2] mention is also made of Robert de Timbercombe, Vicar of Taunton and Master Walter de Tolre, Master of the Schools at Taunton (*c.* 1286). In a Calendar of Inquisitions, vol. v, 3 Ed. 11 (1310) on a question of proof of age of Hugh, son and heir of Thomas de la Tour, it is recorded that William Fichet, aged 60, knew of the birth and christening at Broomfield Church, as he was bailiff to Walter de la Lynde, Lord of Broomfield. So did Hugh Popham, because he had a son born the same year : also Adam de Chandos, a name well known on the Quantocks at this time, because he was present at the birth. So did William Haleswell (Halswell ?), aged 40, as he was at the feast. So, also, did John de Kent because he had a son in company with the said Hugh, seventeen years ago, at the school at Taunton. The above extract is interesting, not only as showing, as by a kind of sidelight the gathering of well-known Quantock residents at the christening of a neighbour's son at Broomfield Church, but also as revealing the fact that boys of quite tender years were taught and reared at Taunton. These little pupils were quite different from Christ's "pauperes" helped at places designed for these

1. Anglia Sacra, vol. i, pp. 20, 207.
2. Catalogue of Ancient Deeds, p. 172.

charitable purposes. In an account of Somerset Chantries[1] there is mention of a large and goodly "house newe builded, erected and made for a Schole at Taunton about xxv years past wherein was a Schole master and an usher for the wants of 140–180 Scholars, founded by Roger Hill, Merchant, in St. James Parish." At Bridgwater (1219) it may be noted that at St. John's Hospital thirteen poor scholars lived within the walls excused full ritual that they may keep school daily in town.

1. Som. Record Society, vol. ii.

Chapter VII.

Castles of the Valley of the Parret.

AFTER the Conquest the Valley of the Parret was treated by the Normans as a strategic whole to be defended by castles of a stronger type than had hitherto existed. With Stoke (Courcy) Castle held by William de Falaise near the mouth of the river : Dunster Castle by William de Mohun further down the coast : Montacute Castle by Comes Moritoniensis, the Conqueror's half-brother : Castle Cary by Walter de Douai ; and Richmonte Castle by Azelin Gouel de Percheval under Geoffrey de Moubrai the warlike Bishop of Coutances, it is possible to discern the features of a strong " Quadrilateral." Roger, and, afterwards, William de Corcelle were firmly planted at Kilve and at numerous Quantock manors, together with East Brent and Chilton on Polden. The Norman fangs were securely fastened upon the prey in Somerset by sea and land.

Along the waters of the Severn Sea the Mohun barons with their fore-shore rights extending from Countisbury and the King's Forest of Exmoor right down to Shurton Bars were supreme, guarding Minehead, Dunster, Watchet and all landing-places when the phenomenal retreat of Severn tidal waters offered a soft anchorage for hostile craft. Such a convenient landing-place may be seen any time at the ebb of the tide at Blue Anchor. For centuries after the Conquest invasion by sea upon North Somerset was always possible at unexpected spots where the ships of shallow draught could be beached at the ebb and could depart at the flow of high tides. Dunster Castle figured in the wars of Matilda as partially inaccessible on the sea flank (*marino gurgite alluente*

inaccessum), although it requires a feat of imagination now to call up Dunster port. In the days of Henry III a horde of Welshmen under William de Berkeley attacked Dunster Castle (1265), when it was defended by Adam le Gurdon.

In the days of Henry VIII precautions were taken to defend "The Coste of England upon Severn."[1] There were guns placed at the mouth of the Parret ; a battery below Minehead ; semi-circular enclosures of piles off Watchet and Porlock ; on Hurdstone point and Porlock two round towers.[2] From the archives of Nettlecombe Court we know that, before the Armada days, elaborate precautions were taken to "impeach" a hostile landing. In each parish on the Quantocks and Brendons men were ready to assemble under leaders and to repair at a moment's notice to a danger spot. Careful watch along the sea was kept at "Cleeve hill" above Watchet with a system of fire-signalling to the Quantocks at such places as "fire-beacon hill" above Crowcombe and, presumably, to Bagborough itself (*i.e.* the Beacon borough). In Elizabethan times George Sydenham of Combe Sydenham, Sir John Stowell of Cothelston, Colonel Luttrell of Dunster and many others, both "pikemen" and "shot" men, enumerated by Emanuel Green, were ready to receive the Spanish enemy. There were twelve thousand men recruited in Somerset and at Mynnett (Minehead) there were two ships, one of thirty-five tons and the other of forty-six tons. There is the evidence of Elizabethan State Papers to show that Somerset and South Wales were grouped in one command. There were plans and projects for a Spanish Armada working from Milford Haven to make a descent upon the north coasts of Somerset.[3] Even in Napoleon's time the thought of a French invasion upon this part of the Channel was held to be likely (1798) and a place-name called "French Buzzums" near the mouth of the Parret (a phrase of uncertain meaning) keeps alive a coast-alarm that filled South Wales and Somerset. For centuries the coast of Somerset was a first-class problem, and Sir W. Raleigh re-

1. Cotton. MS., Aug : 1, vol. i.
2. E. Green's "Somerset and the Armada."
3. State Papers. *See* below under "Burrington."

ported upon it, but it always needed " a nice observation of tide " on the part of the foe.[1]

Of all the old Norman forts in this notable " Quadrilateral " Dunster Castle alone survives in its ancient magnificence, restored of late years by the Luttrell family, who succeeded the Mohuns. Stoke Courcy Castle has long been in ruins, destroyed in the reign of Henry VI by William de Bonville. Castle Cary with its records written in the " Gesta Stephani " and a fort held for the Empress Matilda together with Richmonte at Harptree, are both now level with the ground.

When Montacute fell and the last hope of the Saxons was shattered the way was open to Exeter and the West, the part played by Neroche Castle being uncertain. The Valley of the Parret was forced from end to end.[2]

The Norman defences of the Parret valley are of course different in scope and in military intention from those that went before them. Perhaps the newest departure was the erection of Stoke-Courcy Castle to guard the Parret mouth. It was a more solid form of defence than Harold's " Castellarium " near Over-Stowey Church or the British stronghold of Cannington Park. In the erection of Stoke Courcy Castle we seem to recognise how the Norman Conquerors fully understood the strategic importance of the Lower Parret. On the South, Montacute was really taking the place of the Roman Stoke-sub-Hamdon and Ilchester, whilst Castle Cary succeeded to the British South Cadbury. Both Somerton Castle and Taunton Castle were mainly Saxon strongholds, Bridgwater being of course much later. Perhaps Bridgwater took the place of Puriton and Downend—and the castle and earthworks there.[3] It is clear that the numerous pre-existing British and Belgic-British strongholds belong to a different category in the defence of the Parret Valley and, to speak more widely, of Dumnonia and the West. Brent Knoll, long

1. Edwards' " Life of Raleigh."

2. *See* " The Norman Conquest of Somerset," by the Rev. W. H. P. Greswell, Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc. *Proc.*, vol. lii, 1906.

3. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. lxvi, p. 66.

a castellarium, and Danesborough (or Dousboro') Castle were roadside defences as we shall see when tracing the Saxon "Herepath" westward across the Parret,—in their way as important as the forts which guarded "the Fossway" on the south. Brent Knoll, judging from its large dimensions and extended escarpments towards the north, strikes the eye as being a cattle refuge, as well as a fort. The "Castellum" in Broomfield parish on the Quantocks, originally no doubt a little palisaded turf fort, became a "Porcheria" or swine fold.[1] The stronghold of Worlebury, close to Weston-super-Mare and above "The Anchorage," is said to have included grain pits. The Norman fort, with its portcullis and "curtains" between towers and crenellated walls and moat, as at Stoke Courcy, and "outer" and "inner" ballium was very different. The main object of Bridgwater Castle was to control river traffic and so the "Water-Bailiff" was a most important man, as great as the "Constable" or Domesday "Constabularius" of Taunton.

To the ancient Castles and Baronies of the Parret Valley and neighbourhood certain manors were attached of a superior kind and order serving as a foundation and forming "le manoir principal du fief celui qu' habite le suzerain" and often giving a name to the "Honor." Presently, to the holders of the baronies and castles later enfeoffments, together with marriages and wardships, brought increased power and prestige. These do not figure in the Domesday record. For instance, in the case of William de Falaise and Stoke Courcy it is simply recorded that, besides Wootton-Courtney and Worspring, he held Stoche (or Stoke) and that to this manor an addition of half a hide was made, held by a thane in the time of Edward the Confessor. But, in the reign of Edward II, when an inquisition was held about the lands of John Waleran, or Walrond, the following descriptive expansion is given in a MS. in the possession of the late Lord St. Audries: "A State of the title of John, Earl of Egmont to Wreck of Sea in the Royalty of Stoke Courcy." First, the manor of Stoke (Courcy) with a fortelletum or castellet, two gardens of reeds, a water-

1. Rotuli Hundredorum, Edw. I.

mill, sixty burgages, five cottages, pleas and perquisites of court and the hundred.

Second, the Manor of Wyke with the capital messuage, curtilage, the dovehouse, a water-mill, 410 acres of arable land, 101*a*. 2*r*. 0*p*. of meadow, 664*a*. 2*r*. 0*p*. of pasture including the park (Wick Park) and a parcel of land upon Quantock, five hundred acres in extent. This is the Domesday "additamentum" in Over Stowey constituting the Quantock woods and combes, "the Chace of the de Courcy family," as Collinson describes it. To this very day the outlines of this large and most important "membrum" of Stoke (Courcy) Castle can be detected in "Wyke Tything" and the modern "land tax." It is said that portions of this "membrum" are found from Triscombe and Quantock Lodge on the Quantocks down to Wick on the estuary of the Parret.[1] The document of Edward II says "in all in the manor of Wyke there are 1176 acres; 20 free tenants who paid 20*s*. in lieu of all services; Adam Chandos who paid 2*s*. for leave to common upon Quantock, all owing suit of Court. Also, 40 customary tenants who performed 3,394 days' labour from the Feast of Michaelmas to the Gule (first) of August at ½*d*. per diem; and 1306 days' labour from the Gule of August to the Feast of Michaelmas at 1*d*. per diem; all which together with the Pleas and Perquisites of Court amounted to £45 5*s*. 7*d*.

In 12 Henry VI a Trivet held the Manor of Chilton Trinity "as of the Manor of Wyke." Why not Stoke (Courcy)? It looks as if the right title should really have been "The Borough and Honor of Wyke."

In Stuart times, in a legal dispute about Quantock rights Algernon, Earl of Northumberland, stated that "he has been lawfully seised in his demesne as of fee of the manor and lordship of Week-fitzpayne with all its appurtenances held of his Majesty under a certain Fee Farm rent; that there were large demesnes belonging to the said manor and divers pasture grounds, commons and wastes belonging to the said manor, whereof one called Quantock containing about 1000 acres has from time immemorial (since Domesday ?) been reputed part

1. *See* Modern Rate Book.

of the said manor—that his tenants claimed to have common for 1500 sheep," etc. It may be noted that the earl's claim to Quantock is one thousand instead of five hundred acres, a case of land hunger since the days of Edward II.

But the important point here is the prominence of Wick Manor. Without stretching a point we may surely infer that there was always more local history about Wick than about Stoke. In "Kirby's Quest" (1284) Wick is held by the Queen of England together with the Hundred of Cannington for five hides of land by gift of the king. However this temporary sequestration took place, it is clear that Wick was a "five-hide unit" and that it was closely bound up with the Hundred of Cannington. A visit to Wick Moor with the reflection that here, as at Dunster, the tide may have flowed up and so given an ancient landing-place near Wick Farm may lift the mystery a little. Could "Wick" have been a Roman "vicus"?

Here, then, we have a glimpse of the beginnings of Stoke (Courcy) Castle and Barony, to all intents and purposes a coast fortress of which "Wick" was the principal membrum with an extension on the Quantock hills including Aley or Ely manor in Over Stowey. Wick Park, Wick Farm, Wick Pound and Wick Mills all still exist, so does Wick Barrow and Wick Moor. At Wick Barrow excavations were recently made which revealed the burial place, (presumably of some Bronze Age chieftain), known, also, as "Pixies Mound." The discovery of a Constantine coin in the grave proved that the Romans had interfered with this ancient tumulus,[1] and that they visited Wick. Near Wick Park a large number of bronze Celts, now in the Taunton Museum, were discovered by labourers in a field about one and a half miles from Wick Barrow and to the N.E. of Wick Park. They were found under a flat stone in stiff clay at a depth of two feet. Sidwell or the well of St. Sativola may take us back to early Celtic days.[2]

Higher up the Channel and associated very closely with the

1. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. liv, pt. ii, p. 2.
2. *Ibidem*, p. 72.

very ancient settlement of Congresbury (*i.e.* St. Congar's town) was Wick St. Lawrence. In both cases the "Wick" is the Anglo-Saxon "Wic" or "Wyk" a dwelling-place, as in Alnwick the dwelling on the Aln, Greenwich, Norwich, Hampton Wick, Shapwick, etc.

It may be noted that persistent local rumour has placed the chief route to Glaston along a so-called "Pilgrims' road" leading from Stolford and Wick and so to Comwich Ford or Passage by Withycombe Hill. It is even said that Joseph of Arimathea passed this way instead of *via* Parret mouth. The little chapel of Ichetoche (Idstoke or Edstock) with its romantic ruins has an unknown beginning—may not this route partially explain its origin as it lies in the vicinity ?

"Third, the Manor of Radweye with the capital messuage and 256 acres of arable land ; 41 of meadow ; 52 of pasture ; 30 of wood, in all 379 acres. Besides 15 free tenants and 16 customary tenants who perform 1,435 days' labour from the Feast of Michaelmas to the Gule of August at ½*d.* per diem : and from the Gule of August to Michaelmas, 455 days' labour at 1*d.* per diem which, together with Pleas and Perquisites of Court amounted to £19 1*s.* 8*d.* per annum."

"Fourth, the Manor of Wyndiates with the Barton and Curtilage (close to Stoke Courcy Castle) : 138 acres of arable, 8 acres of meadow ; 40 acres of pasture, in all 216 acres. Value £2 12*s.* 8*d.*, but no Pleas, Perquisites and suit of Court." Presently, the distinction between Wyke and Wyndiates disappeared. The charge of repairing the sea-wall and keeping out the sea rested upon the Manor of Wyke. On the other hand fishing rents and privileges accrued to it : also Wreck of Sea, by reason of the Manor of Stoke (Courcy) between Lilstock, where the Mohun right extended, and Machespol (Marsh Pool or Pill). To this day the Dunster foreshore right extends from Countisbury to Shurton Bars, as noted.

Between Shurton Bars and "Wick Rocks" is a low-lying coast district, once a fruitful tract for corn, but now comparatively rough and overgrown with weeds and brambles. It is possible, here and there, to detect the old-world "balks" or turf divisions of the open field system dividing one furlong from another in Stoverd Field, Knighton Field and Burton

Field (Tithe Map). The clay soil is hard to work, especially in dry seasons and wheat cultivation has been abandoned. The coast is haunted by sea-birds such as burrow-ducks, tern, oyster-catchers and ringed plovers and, in the spring, the plaintive cry of the nesting peewit is often heard. In winter strange migrants are sometimes seen from the north searching the mud flats for food. The most unexpected bird visitor ever recorded were two Egyptian vultures which were seen here in 1825 and shot. Pallas's grouse in more recent times haunted the lower Parret. The fishermen mounted on their curious "mud-horses" or wooden sledges adapted to traverse the treacherous quick-sands are seen, now and then, when the retreating tide permits, visiting their distant nets.

In this region, so suited for the uses of an amphibious life and kept from inundation by such devices as sea walls, as along "Wall Common," and full of signs of a submerged forest, a curious title has, in past times been invented for a manor. Upon the rocks and ledges covered and uncovered at ebb and flow a wealth of sea-weed always grows. At certain times of the year rough tides detach it in masses and carry it shorewards where it forms a long and distinct line called "The Oare Mark." In that lawsuit (already quoted) between Lord Clifford of Cannington and Lord Egmont, formerly Lord of Stoke Courcy Castle, about "Wreck of Sea" (1760) Lord Clifford's advocates invented a phrase "The Oare places' and even the "Manor of Oare," this oare or seaweed having a certain value of its own for fertilisation. The farmers on lands adjoining the sea had the right to collect and use it just as they had the right to bring stones to their kilns and burn lime with useful effect. Lord Egmont's advocates could not, however, allow this extended use of the definition "Manor" which, in its beginning really meant the abiding-place of the occupant. "Wick Rocks" hardly lent themselves to this legal definition which would give to the lord of the Manor of Wyke "a settle" on the foreshore as appurtenant. Even the kelp-burners of Connemara would hardly be satisfied with such a cabin.

On the 25th September, 1718, a vessel laden with kelp or sea-weed and bound to Bristol, probably for the manufacture of

glass, (for this was one of its uses), broke in pieces at Shurton Bars within the bounds of the Stoke-Courcy Barony and four men and one woman were drowned and only Bartholomew Rawlin saved alive. Notwithstanding this the Clifford family claimed the wreck. By sea and land the rights of Wyke Manor were variously interpreted.

In the same document it is stated that Nicholas Luttrell, apparently of Honibere, (Domesday Herdeneberie), in the reign of Queen Mary (1557), obtained a lease of the Manor of Wyke Fitzpaine and with it took the acknowledgment of culture upon the Quantock Hills, "as appurtenant to the Manor of Wyke." It also appears that the Chapel of St. Michael, a chapel of ease always used by the inhabitants of Wyke, was part of the same manor. Subsequently this manor came into the possession of Robert Syderfin and in 1736 to Robert Darch together with the messuage, tenement and farm called Wyke Park and all that messuage and tenement called Quantock Farm with the rights, members and appurtenances in Over Stowey and Stoke Courcy. The demesne lands hardly varied at all from 1 Edward I to 1760, Robert Lord Waleran holding 1382 acres; Lord Egmont almost exactly the same, exclusive of Quantock Commons.

There seems to have been some ambiguity about the Manor of Shurton. At Domesday, it would be, apparently, part of the possessions of Roger de Corcelle under the name of Seredeston, as this manor, with Pury Furneaux, Woolston, Clayhill, Chilton Trinity was part of a continuous block of land just here. It is possible that Collinson has confused it with Sheerston in North Petherton, but in the "Nomina villarum" (1315) it occurs as "Shereveston" with Matthew de Furneaux, owner, the lineal successor of Roger de Corcelle, also Domesday holder of Peri or Pury. In the reign of Edward II reprises were paid from Stoke Courcy Castle to Matthew de Furneaux, apparently for Shurton. But Shurton sometimes seems to fall under the Mohun Barony.[1]

"Shurton Court" still exists under this name and has had many changes of owners. Originally Shurton Barrs was said

1. *See* Maxwell Lyte's "Dunster."

to have been the estate of Sir John Barre whose family held it of the Royalty of Stoke Courcy from a vast antiquity, Willielmus Barre being returned by William de Courcy, the Sewer Baron of Stoke Courcy in the reign of Henry II as holding one knight's fee of him at that time, *viz.* upon the marriage of Henry II's daughter to Henry the Lion (*Liber Niger Scaccarii*). This explanation is given in the document about "Wreck of Sea," quoted above. The Barry family originally may have got their name from Barry Island off Cardiff.

The Manor of Shurton was perfectly distinct from the Manor of Wyke historically and otherwise and if Nicholas Luttrell of Honibere and Lilstock bought the lease of Wyke, the occupation was only for a time. The Baronies of Stoke Courcy and of Dunster were always historically distinct. Nicholas Luttrell himself, son of Andrew Luttrell, married Jane Cheverell (d. 1592) and was ancestor of the Luttrells of Hartland Abbey.

How the Honor and Barony of Stoke Courcy grew after its first Domesday beginning may be inferred from Sir H. Maxwell Lyte's remarks on the de Curci family: "In 1166 the Barony of William de Curci, the steward (*dapifer*), held by his grandfather, his father and himself was returned as comprising twenty-five fees and a quarter 'of the old enfeoffment' created before the death of Henry I and four fees and a quarter 'of the new enfeoffment' created by his father. He also had through his mother (*ex parte matris suæ*) seventeen fees of the Barony of William le Meschin. All of the foregoing, held of him by military service, were of course irrespective of his demesnes at Stoke, Nuneham, Harewood (now the seat of the Lascelles family in Yorkshire)" and elsewhere.[1] To begin with the *raison d'etre* of Stoke Courcy Castle was to watch the old "Botestall" at the mouth of the Parret and Stolford Bay. Afterwards this landing-place gave rise to oversea expeditions to South Wales and then to Ireland where John de Courcy, accompanied by the le Poers (Puher or Power)

1. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. lxvi, p. 107.

and Butlers, who seem to have lived at Stoke Courcy to begin with, conquered Ulster.[1]

Shurton has been mentioned, and therefore immortalised, by S. T. Coleridge, in a poem called "Lines written at Shurton Bars" (1795). How and why S. T. C. came to this desolate spot is not known, perhaps from Bridgwater or Nether Stowey; or, possibly, he may have crossed over here from South Wales. When he wrote his verses Coleridge was in a somewhat mournful and pensive mood, relieved by the thought of Sara Fricker, the lady whom he married shortly afterwards.

> "And hark, my Love! The sea-breeze moans
> Through yon reft house! O'er rolling stones
> In bold ambitious sweep
> The onward-surging tides supply
> The silence of the cloudless sky
> With mimic thunders deep."

The "reft house" still seems to stand at Shurton Bars and the "onward surging tides" beat up along the coast. The "watch fire" or light from the Flat Holmes is there as when S. T. C. saw it "dark reddening from the Channel'd Isle." In 1795 Coleridge and Southey were indulging in their dreams of "Pantisocracy" and a home in the New World by the Susquehana. Nearly 150 years before this Humphrey Blake set out from Steart, not far from Shurton Bars, on that notable and more practical voyage of colonisation to Carolina, as we shall notice presently.

It does not appear that either Coleridge, Southey or Wordsworth took much interest in local history or in the annals of the Parret river. S. T. C. alludes on one occasion to it in a letter to Tom Poole, dated May 29th, 1796. "I have wandered, too, by the river Parret, which looks as filthy as if all the 'parrots' of the House of Commons had been washing their consciences therein." It was not to be compared with "The dear gutters of Stowey."

But, if his genius had taken fire at the thoughts and episodes that cluster round this muddy, shifting current what a theme, or, rather, multitude of themes lay before him! Sir Walter

1. Hist. MSS. Com., vol. i, Ninth Report.

Scott in the Preface to the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" asked "Why was the harp of Quantock silent?" S. T. C. had the poet's imagination, perhaps greater in one way than that of Sir Walter Scott, who immortalised the legends and romance of Scotland to the full, and Coleridge also was master of a metre adapted to such themes as Sir Walter himself acknowledged.

There lay a world of national romance before Coleridge which he missed and Scott seized in the north. But what a story he could have made out of Stoke Courcy Castle and its Barons! Or, indeed, out of Nether Stowey and its annals as a Caput Baroniae! But when S. T. P. lived at Coleridge Cottage, Nether Stowey, just under Castle Hill Mount he says nothing about the old Norman fort or the Norman Barons there that we can identify.

Castles in the Parret Valley, as elsewhere, come and go, many causes contributing to their extinction, and, in the case of Stoke Courcy Castle, the Church stepped in there when an alien Priory, attached to Lonley in Normandy, was founded and much property (now known as Monkton and Priory Farm) was handed over together with the tithes. The endowment robbed Stoke and Wyke of much of their primary importance and the chaplaincy of the Castle Chapel itself fell under the Prior of St. Lonley. It may be noted as a matter of more than passing interest that the religious endowments of Stoke Courcy passed to Eton College when it was founded by Henry VI and that the Eton authorities still enjoy the great tithes commuted in 1837 at £800 per annum.

The fate of Montacute Castle, with which was associated the great "Fee of Mortain," was, after the rebellion of William, son of Robert, Earl of Moretain, and the confiscation that followed, to become a Priory of black Cluniac monks. In the reign of Henry I the remains of the historic castle on the mount were converted into a beautiful chapel, described by Leland (*temp.* Henry VIII) as "roofed all with stone, covered very artificially, dedicated to St. Michael, vaulted within, with stairs made with stone from the foot of the hill to the top." The nucleus of the great "Fee of Mortain" there would appear to have been the Manor and Hundred of Bishopston (to which allusion has been made) with the mill there and the

fair of Hamden; also, the Manor and Hundred of Tintenhulle, etc. Stoke-sub-Hamden was the chief membrum of the Barony of Hatch, held by the Beauchamp family, whence Hatch Beauchamp. John de Beauchamp in the reign of Edward I built a mansion here which he fortified and embattled. As a castle it may be looked upon as the lineal successor of Montagud or Montacute, so called in the first place from a Norman "Mons acutus." Hacche was part really of the Domesday possessions of Robert Count of Mortain.

At Stoke-sub-Hamdon the Church stepped in here also and in 1304 a college or chantry for five priests was founded to say prayers and masses for the repose of the soul of John de Beauchamp and his family. This Beauchamp chantry resembled closely the Furneaux chantry of five priests at Kilve founded a few years later to say prayers for the soul of Simon de Furneaux and his family. It may be interesting to note how these Norman castles, built to overawe the land from a military point of view were converted to more pious usages. In the particular case of Montacute Castle, built no doubt to command the fossway, there was a reversion to an original idea when "Bishopston," its principal member, seemingly kept in memory some early British or Celtic chief or bishop.

The first nucleus of the great Dunster Barony lay in Dunster itself with Marshwood, Alcombe, Avill, Stanton, etc., and a "municipium" mentioned in "Gesta Stephani": in Minehead and its haven, although Dunster itself had a "portus": in Carhampton and "Karmore": eastward, in Kelvetun or Kilton and its southern section on the Quantocks known as "Woodlands." The two Baronies of Dunster and Stoke Courcy are interlaced here in the eastern section generally, Stockland lying close to Stolford and the Parret estuary. The Honor of Dunster has been described very minutely by Sir H. Maxwell Lyte and there are, surely few places in England with such a varied and romantic interest. Upon so many occasions does it reflect the larger national events. In the wars of Matilda the Mohuns were on the side of the Empress (1138) and their great adversary was Henry de Tracy of Barnstaple. We are told in the "Gesta Stephani" that the cruelties and devastation of this Civil war were great and

terrible. The whole region of Exmoor between Dunster and Barnstaple must have shared in it. The highway and road from Exford to Homly meade Post and so to Barnstaple must have echoed with the tramp of warlike hosts. In the great Civil War in Stuart times Prince Charles (June, 1645) lodged at Dunster Castle riding thence to Barnstaple over Exmoor in company with Brian Duppa, Bishop of Salisbury, Lord Colepeper, Lord Capel, Richard Fanshawe and others. On June 14th, 1645, the fatal Battle of Naseby was fought.

Nether Stowey, the old caput Baroniae, and the portion of Alured de Hispania at the Conquest (succeeded by the de Candos, Columbers, and Audley families), must be coupled with Stoke (Courcy) as a place of defence, the two places being in sight of one another. The local "Tothills," still so called, were within signalling distance of a primitive kind. The nucleus of the Stowey Barony must be looked for in Over and Nether Stowey which included Dodington formerly: in the original Domesday "Cantocke" or Quantock, close to Spaxton and just above Enmore Castle; in such Quantock places as Plainsfield, Marsh Mills (Mulsella), Bincombe, Rowbear, in Fiddington and much coterminous territory. Upon the Quantock Hills the barony claimed one thousand acres, according to the statement of a witness in the case of Humphrey Blake *v.* The Earl of Northumberland, where Angell Grey held at Nether Stowey the forfeited possessions of the Audley Barons. The patch of one thousand acres on Quantock claimed by the Earl of Northumberland for his barony of Stoke Courcy corresponds to this second patch of one thousand acres claimed for the Nether Stowey Barony. Much of this Nether Stowey Quantock would seem to be represented by what is known now as "The Customs," catalogued in the modern tithe map as Custom Wood, numbers 551, 555 with 348*a*. 3*r*. 22*p*. and numbers 556, 561 with 140 acres.

The inhabitants of Stowey still enjoy an old-world custom of gathering wood upon the Customs carrying it down on head or shoulders but not wheeling it down. This may point to a privilege granted when Quantock was all reckoned as a Royal Forest. In another part of the Quantocks and in the parish of Holford there is still "Newspring Customs." It would

appear that the Stowey Barony really succeeded Count Harold's portion, which guarded the main approach to the Quantocks, always and from their very position a "key" range running inland and commanding the Vale of Taunton Deane and the route westward. In their way the Quantocks were as important as "The Polden" ridge which ran inland from the Parret. As if to give the Stowey Barons a command of both the Quantocks and the Polden ridge we find that they were given Puriton, Downend and Woollavington.[1] The same idea of guarding the Parret both from Stoke (Courcy) and also from Stowey, further inland, is at once apparent. It emphasises the great strategic importance of the Parret and especially the lower Parret. It may be noted, also, how many manors along the Lower Parret were held at the Conquest by Walter de Douai, lord of Castle Cary, *viz.* Paulet, Stretchill, Cruk or Creek, Walpole, Brugie (Bridgwater), Bawdrip—held of the manor of Castle Cary,[2] Bradney, Horsey, Wembdon, Burnham, Huntspill, Berrow, Brean, constituting a riverine block, chiefly on the east of the Parret. Walter de Douai also commanded Weare and Overweare at the head of the Axe navigation and also Weston (super-mare) and the original "anchorage" there by holding Worle. How thorough these Norman strategists really were must be apparent! Their strongholds superseded earlier and less efficient defences: there was, above all, a scheme of land and sea defence, with a proper disposition of forces. The inadequacy of Saxon defences against William the Conqueror must be apparent when we consider how, in one particular locality on the Quantocks, Harold's "Castellarium," near the site of Over Stowey Church, had to undertake the defence work which in Norman times fell upon Stoke Courcy Castle and the subsequent Norman rectangular fort at Nether Stowey. Lastly, it must be remembered that these Domesday Norman castles, abovementioned and built for strategic purposes, differ essentially from the subsequent so-called "adulterine castles" which belong to a totally different category.

1. *See* Pipe Rolls and *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. lxvi, p. 66.
2. *Collinson*, vol. iii, p. 91.

Chapter VIII.

Some Manors and their Lords.

OF all the Manors in Mid and West Somerset there was, perhaps, no single one to compare in antiquity and old-world importance with the Manor of Taunton. The prominence given to it in the Domesday record attests to this and the interest attached to it is not military only, although this latter, no doubt, was always great. It had strong traditions which, as we may have seen, linked it with the earlier Annals of Dumnonia proper. Here is a glimpse into prae-Norman social life.

In the peculiar Manor of Taunton there were two sorts of land, "Bondland" and "Overland"—the bondland being that whereon existed ancient dwelling-places (*auster land*), held by a customary fine and rent resolute, paying "heriots" (best beast) and doing other suits and services. The overland is that whereon in ancient times there was no tenement held by a fine and rent. To this day in some Quantock parishes there are certain tenements which enjoy rights of common, simply because they are old tenements, *i.e.* auster land, for example at Kilve and Holford.

In the Manor of Taunton the mode of conveyance was by a surrender of the estate, upon every sale or mortgage, into the hands of the lord, in this case the Bishop of Winchester, which surrender was lodged in the Exchequer or the room where all the titles of the manor were deposited and always open for inspection. This made it easy to prove the validity of a title and was a security against all frauds in mortgages. The following was the scale paid into the Exchequer of Taunton

Manor in every alienation, instructive so far as it shows the extent in acreage of the various tenements :

A yard land (virgate) .	£8	0	0	for	40 acres
A half-yard land . .	4	0	0	,,	20 ,,
A 15-acre tenement .	3	15	0	,,	15 ,,
A farthing land . .	3	0	0	,,	12? ,,
A 10-acre tenement .	2	15	0		
An 8-acre tenement .	1	15	0		
A 5-acre tenement . .	1	5	0		

For centuries the Manor of Taunton was one of the most valuable properties of the Bishops of Winchester.

Sales have taken place from time to time and, during the Bishopric of Walter Curle (1632), an Act was passed for the sale of Bishops' lands, and the Manor of Taunton and Taunton-Deane, together with the castle and all appurtenances, were sold by trustees appointed by Parliament on March 30th, 1647, to Brampton Gurdon of Accrington in the County of Suffolk and John Hill of Taunton-Deane. But Collinson remarks that the manor was afterwards recovered by and was still vested in the Bishopric of Winchester in his time (*c.* 1790). It is said that in the neighbourhood of Taunton the Bishops of Winchester still reserve Mining Royalties on certain estates. John Hill was a member of the Spaxton family of that name.[1] But the story of Taunton under the regime of the Bishops of Winchester, such as William of Wykeham and Cardinal Beaufort, merits a volume by itself. Curiously enough there do not appear to be many records now at Winchester itself of the old-world connection with Taunton. The Manor of Taunton belonged in 1822 to William Kinglake of the family of the historian, passing to him from the families of Chapleyn, Sweeting and Rogers.[2] Could not a member of the historian's family take up the pen ? The office of the Keeper of Taunton Castle and also of Bailiff of the Bishop of Winchester was bought in 1785 by Sir Benjamin Hammet, alderman of the City of London. In 1786 he was associated

1. *See* Hylle or Hull Cartulary.
2. Savage's "History of Taunton," p. 89.

in this office with James Esdaile and Edward Jeffries Esdaile, bankers.[1]

At Domesday (1086) the following customs were enumerated as belonging to Taunton :

(1) *Burgheristh*, which some interpret as equivalent to Burghbrech or Burglary in the Borough. Henry Spelman hazards a conjecture of Arthur Agard's (1540) that it was a duty of finding sailors for the king's army but, at the same time he objects to this explanation on the ground that Taunton was not a seaport town nor placed near any celebrated river (*nec oppidum maritimum nec celebri fluvio assitum*). We, in our turn, may object that Henry Spelman's geographical knowledge was at fault, Taunton being closely in touch with the Parret and with the mouth of the Parret, so there may be something in this explanation, although it is not very obvious from the word Burgheristh itself. Moreover, it may be remembered that in Richard I's reign an Archdeacon of Taunton, William Wrotham, was a great organiser and director of the king's ships. Perhaps, after all, Burgheristh may be a variant form of Burgriht such as we find in connection with the Barony of Nether Stowey and Puriton and Downend, mention being made of this Burgriht in the Pipe Rolls.

Eyton in his "Domesday Studies of Somerset" thinks that Taunton was "a highly privileged Manor and Hundred" and that probably neither King nor Earl nor Sheriff nor Justiciar had any ingress upon it. It was a Burgh and had its right of market, recorded in Domesday. "As much is not said of any other manor or franchise of Somerset, whether Bishop or Abbot, or Comte, or Earl or Baron were its Lord. Domesday Boroughs ordinarily appertained to the Crown only."[2] At any rate Taunton was quite an exceptional manor, self-governing and independent. It did not possess the prestige of Glaston, where indeed the king's writ did not run within the sacred sixty acres. The fact that King William made Walchelîne, his cousin and chaplain, Bishop of Winchester and therefore Lord of the Manor of Taunton, (the greatest

1. Savage's "History of Taunton," p. 273.
2. Vol. i, p. 53.

source of the bishopric's wealth), testifies to the importance of this part of Somerset as much as to the importance of Winchester. Further, before Domesday, it appears that Bishop Walcheline had rebuilt Taunton Castle.[1]

(2) *Latrones.* The Bishop of Winchester as Lord of the Manor of Taunton could punish thieves and highwaymen. Probably he had his own gallows for the punishment of offenders.

(3) *Pacis infractio.* All violations of the peace were punished by the Bishop of Winchester. By the 36th Law of King Alfred the fine for breach of the peace was sixty shillings in a Bishop's or Alderman's town to be paid to him. This was the rule under the Saxon kings until the Conqueror's time when fines for breach of the peace were remitted into the King's Exchequer and made part of the Royal Revenue. Taunton, at Domesday, would appear to have retained the Saxon usage and the fact of this retention is another proof of its importance.[2]

(4) *Hainfare* or *Heinfare.* Money or fines for fugitive "servi" or slaves, the jurisdiction and punishment belonging to the lord.

(5) *Denarii de Hundret.* The hundred pence was a sum usually demanded and collected by the Sheriff from each tything within the County. This went as a rule to the King's Exchequer, the tertius denarius or every third penny going to the Comes or Sheriff.

(6) *Denarius S. Petri or Romescot.* King Ina ordained that in every family throughout the Kingdom of the West Saxons one penny should be collected at Lammas and sent over to Rome. In this case the question arises whether it was the privilege of the Bishop of Winchester to collect and appropriate (?) the Romescot or Hearth penny. Æthelwulf the father of King Alfred gave alms not tribute to Rome, *viz.* three hundred mancusses (a mancus was thirty denarii); one hundred in honour of St. Peter for lights on Easter eve and at cock-crow; one hundred in honour of St. Paul with a similar use,

1. Eyton's Domesday Survey, vol. i, pp. 163, 192.
2. Gurdon's "History of Parliament," p. 97.

and one hundred to the Pope. King Alfred, as we know, sent messages and alms to the Patriarch of Jerusalem as well as to the Pope. At the same time he gave part of his Royal income to the two monasteries he had built, *i.e.* Athelney and Shaftesbury and also part to the schools of his own nation; part again for the use of the neighbouring monasteries in all "Saxony and Mercia"; and, during some years, to the churches and servants of God dwelling in Wales, Cornwall, Gaul, Armorica and sometimes also in Ireland. By his gift, and alms King Alfred showed a wise resolve to encourage schools, learning and monasteries wherever they were. William the Conqueror commanded the "Rom feoh" or "Romescot" to be levied by William de Corcelles at Montacute and Bristowa. There is a great difference between the levying of Peter's Pence as a right and the gift of alms such as King Alfred sent to Rome by Athelmus, Bishop of Winchester.

(7) *Circieti, i.e.* kirkset, meaning, according to some, church tribute (*sceat*), or church seed, to be paid on the Feast of St. Martin. As fowls were paid as well as seed, (as kirkset) the derivation of "sceat" meaning "portion" or "tribute" seems preferable. This obligation, which seems to be one of first-fruits, is attributed to King Ina.

(8) There was the custom of attending the Bishop's Court and Pleas three times a year without summons (*sine ammonitione*). In the Exon Domesday it is noted that the customs and services of the Manor of Taunton have always existed, pointing to their existence in Saxon and Pre-Norman times (*semper habuerunt consuetudines et servitium in Tantone*) and King William granted them to the Church of St. Peter at Winchester as they were in Harold's time.

(9) Military service with the Bishop's men was another custom of Taunton. In 897 Bertulfus, Bishop of Winchester, was appointed by King Alfred to defend the realm against the Danes. Taunton men would of course be summoned. When, in Saxon days, the Diocese of Winchester covered West Somerset Taunton may have been a more important place than Winchester itself as training quarters or a military centre.

The following manors were subject to the above Customs:

Tolland, Oake, Holford in Lydeard St. Lawrence, now known as Trebble's-Holford and Rich's-Holford, (not to be confused with the Holford on the east side of the Quantocks), Upper and Lower Cheddon (Fitzpaine), Maidenbrook (a hamlet in Cheddon), Langford (a tithing in Norton-Fitzwarren), Hilla or Bishops Hull, Hele (Hillfarrance), Hufelle (Heathfield), Nynehead, Norton-Fitzwarren, Bradford, Halse, Scobindan or Scobinalre, Shopnoller (Bagborough ?), Stoke (St. Mary). Neither Stoke nor Shopnoller had the custom of following the bishop's men in the army, nor indeed had Bagborough, although subject to other obligations. It does not appear why these exceptions were made. Sepulture or burial in Taunton was another Custom incidental to the above manors, excepting Bagborough. The meaning of this was in all probability, to make sure of the death of the tenants holding under the customs. As above stated, the youngest of a family inherited and the succession had to be proved from the Episcopal records. Collinson ventures a suggestion that the customs of Taunton were introduced by the Norman bishop who succeeded Stigand, but internal evidence is against this supposition altogether. The " Customs " were surely not Norman.

The manor and parish of North Curry were not associated with any Norman Castle but have their chief interest in Saxon times as the vast natural moat, if it may be so described, surrounding King Alfred's fortress of Athelney and Borough Mump. It must have always been a paradise for the fowler and hunter and the Saxon kings may often have hunted over it from Somerton, or from Peddredan, *i.e.* Perret, wherever this was, either at North or South Petherton. King Edward in the presence of Harold and Tovid his sheriff, and Edith confirmed a charter at " Peddredan " about lands at Litton near Wells.[1] Perhaps the same Peddredan lay in South Petherton (?) where King Athelstan visited and where King William held his Council in 1068. Domesday says that Harold held North Curry in the time of Edward the Confessor, then, at Domesday, King William. Within North Curry were the tythings and hamlets of Knap, Lillesdon, Wrantage, Hillend,

1. Wells MSS.

Newport and Moordon ; Newport being anciently a borough with privileges and a chapel. Knap, Lillesdon and Wrantage had chapels formerly, so Collinson states. There was a market formerly on Wednesday, long since discontinued, but in 1790 a fair was held on August 1st.

Forest law prevailed in North Curry till 13 Henry III when Joscelin, Bishop of Bath, and Peter, Dean of Wells, had licence to disafforest the manor and to enclose and make parks of the woods. Tenants were quit of forest pleas. North Curry was given to the Dean and Chapter of Wells by Richard I, probably to get money for his ransom of 150,000 marks when taken prisoner by the Duke of Austria and handed over to the Emperor Henry VI (1194) and the gift was confirmed by King John, a notification being sent to the knights and free-tenants of the Hundred of North Curry that the Manor of Northcury with the advowson, the land of Hacche and the Hundred had been given to the church and canons of St. Andrew, Wells, for the health of his soul and that of his brother the late King Richard.[1] Hacche is elsewhere described as a member of the Manor of North Curry and is called West Hatch to distinguish it from Hatch Beauchamp. North Curry is so called to distinguish it from Curry Malet and Curry Rivel we suppose ; the distinction of the three parishes not being apparent at Domesday. The Dean and Chapter of Wells are still patrons of North Curry and West Hatch in consequence of the original gift made more than seven hundred years ago.

Under Domesday the entry for North Curry runs thus : "The King holds Churi. It never paid Danegelt nor is it known how many hides it was." It would of course be impossible in this region to calculate the hides, the land itself being of a swampy and indeterminate character. The history of North Curry and of Stoke Gregory and the adjoining manors has been one of gradual reclamation. To give an instance, Mordon figures in the Wells Charters (1247) as having a hide of land, *i.e.* 160 acres, and, with it, West Meridonesmede, an unmeasured tract. In 1316 the tenants of "Muridon" had "each an acre newly inclosed beyond the portion formerly

1. Wells MSS.

assigned to them " as well as thirty acres in a common on the moor " by the bridge in Corymore, and likewise a wide road through Boterlake to Folkesmoor to drive their cattle." To-day the area of North Curry parish is calculated to be 5,819 acres of land, four of water, eleven of tidal water and fourteen of foreshore. Stoke St. Gregory has 4,125 acres of land, four of water, twelve of tidal water and eighteen of foreshore. In times of floods, not at all unusual, much of this low-lying region is covered with water. Stoke St. Gregory is surrounded by Stanmoor on the north, West Sedgemoor on the south, North Curry Moor and Haymoor on the west. On all these moors tenants had rights of common. The hamlets were Mare Green, Woodhill Green, Currylode, Moorlands, Stacth (Statio) on the Parret and the significant name of Warmoor.

The fish and game procurable in ancient times from North Curry may be inferred from an Inquisition held in the reign of Richard II (1377–1400) when a charge was brought against certain poachers who had illegally entered upon the lands of the Dean and Chapter " vi et armis." The " gravamen " was that they had come in with swords and bows and arrows and had taken salmon, peel, pike, lampreys, lamprons, eels and flounders, 2000 hares, 10,000 rabbits, 1000 partridges, wood and corn, etc., worth £240. The Dean and Chapter had been kept out of their rights, which they certainly must have missed, for thirteen years.[1] We see and infer that King Alfred, when he fled to Athelney in near proximity to North Curry, must have relied much on the game and fish stores of the region. Indeed, William of Malmesbury says that there were stags in his day (1090–1143) in the thickets close to Athelney.

King John was a keen sportsman and hunted much in Somerset both on Mendip, where he is still remembered at Axbridge, and, also, in North Petherton and Neroche Forests, his hunting headquarters being at Bridgwater Castle or at Taunton. On September 19th, in the tenth year of his reign King John is " Apud Brug Walter," *i.e.* the " Bridge of Walter " (*de Douai*) : on the 21st of September at Taunton, when William Brewer of Bridgwater Castle is with him. In

1. Wells MSS.

the Pipe Roll of the Bishops of Winchester under the year 1208 there is an entry "For the expenses of the 'familia' of the Lord Bishop against the coming of the King for three days xviii*s.* vi*d.*" Again, for two "tonellae," *i.e.* little tuns or casks of wine bought at Exeter and for 'barrage,' *i.e.* a toll or carriage of the same as far as Tantone iiii*s.* iiii*d.* A tun of wine in old English contained four hogsheads. The arms of Taunton were a castle triple-towered, crenellated and embattled, and the device, allusive to the name, the letter T passed through a "tun" lying fosseways: so the destination of a "tun" of wine to Tantone was not inappropriate. The Bishop of Winchester at that time was Peter de la Roche or Peter de Rupibus, who, as Godwin says, encouraged King John "to withstand the Pope's excommunication," *i.e.* Innocent III.

The sporting privileges of the Bishop of Winchester were very extensive and they had a Charter of Free Warren within their territories. These privileges descended through the several prelates of Winchester "from a very early date before the Norman invasion" to the date of Collinson (*c.* 1790) "in the same extended right of possession."[1]

No wonder King John found the place suitable to his tastes. Here are some further entries from the Pipe Roll of the Bishops of Winchester:

"For the larder and for salting eels and the king's venison ten quarters and a half of salt."

Item—"For the expenses of the Familia of the Lord Bishop awaiting the arrival of Dominus Rex."

Item—"For the Familia of the Lord Bishop of Taunton awaiting the arrival of the Lord King and Lord Bishop for three days one cask of wine."

In the year 1210–1211 King John sent deer from Hereford to replenish the bishop's depleted herd at Taunton. During the interdict when, in 1209, England lay under the Pope's curse King John forbade the capture of all birds during a stay at Bristol,[2] perhaps to revenge himself on the monks and stop

1. Vol. iii, p. 291.
2. Chronica Rogeri de Wendover.

their sport. At the same time King John when hunting is said to have killed a fat buck which called forth the remark that the animal was none the worse for the interdict.

It is more than probable that King John hunted over the Quantocks (in his day a Royal Forest) from Taunton. He gave "King's Hill" and "Prior's Down," in the parish of Broomfield, to the Prior of Taunton and we know from an entry quoted by Sir H. Maxwell Lyte in the *Proceedings* of the Som. Arch. Soc. (vol. lxvi, p. 114) that he was at the Castle of Stoke Courcy (Sept. 1210). Appertaining to this castle was the greater part of Over Stowey parish with the woods on Cocker-Combe and Seven Wells. Mention is also made in the Pipe Roll of the Bishop of Winchester of Chippeleye or Chipley in the parish of Milverton, also of Nailsburne in the parish of Kingston. In 1216 King John gave William Brewer the Manor of "Newton Forester in North Petherton and all belonging to it together with Hawkridge, Exton and Withypoole" on Exmoor. In the management of the Somerset Forests Newton was a paramount manor with distinct duties attached to it.

It must be remembered that the Newton Royal Forestership included the old Somerton Park and Warren, Neroche, Mendip, Selwood, as well as Exmoor and Petherton Park and Forest, and, moreover, that it was held by virtue of a certain tenement called "Windenreid Mead" in Petherton,[1] which was always part of it. The central point of Somerset Forest administration was close to Taunton and the Quantocks. In King John's time, before the first Forest Perambulation of 1279 in the reign of Edward I, the extent of the Royal Forest of Exmoor was at its greatest and probably included Porlock, Selworthy and the coast line as far as Hurlstone (or Redstone) Point. Simultaneously, there was a Dunster Forest attached to the castle of the Mohuns, in the time of Peter de Mauley. Where the Saxon princes had lived and hunted, *viz.* Harold at Dulverton and Stowey and Tostig at Winsford or, further back, where King Edmund had hunted at Cheddar or, indeed, where King Alfred and King Edward the Elder, there King

1. *See* Greswell's "Forests and Deer Parks of Somerset."

John, more than any of the Norman kings, followed hound and hawk. It was a chosen region better suited for sport than the New Forest. William Brewer at Bridgwater Castle, a Neville at Stoke Courcy Castle and the Bishop of Winchester at Taunton would all, in their turn, contribute to the hunting tastes of King John, who was a mighty Nimrod.

North Curry kept alive the memory of King John in "The Customs of the North Curry Feast," explained by the late Rev. J. A. Bennett in the 1885 Report of the MSS. of Wells Cathedral (pp. 312–313). The Reeve, such a personage as old Chaucer might have described, provided the Feast on an allowance known as "Leaze Fees," "Cane wood" and Beef and Pork." He prepared three fat heifers and put them in the Manor Pound adjoining North Curry churchyard, the Sunday before Christmas Day. A personage called a "Dealer" was appointed to cut or deal out the beef and pork on a regular scale, two ribs of beef, two ribs of pork, two loaves of bread, and 2*d*. to each of the holders of the following freehold manors, Knapp, Curry Vowels, Ceeleys, Calmady, Slough, Huntham, Curry Cum Well. Holders of certain tenements, forty-nine in North Curry, thirty-six in Wrantage, thirty-five in East Curry, had bread and beef—each loaf to be made of good white flour and to weigh five pounds.

West Hatch was included in the festivities and the dealers served half a bullock and the hind-quarter of the half pig for the tenements of this manor, but the Reeve of West Hatch before he entered the house of the Reeve of North Curry sang and paid money:

> "King John he was a noble knight
> I am come to demand my right.
> Open the door and let me in,
> Else I'll carry away my money again."

There were many other quaint details about food and drink and a large mince pie and effigy of King John in paste appeared stuck up in the middle of it: after dinner two candles weighing a pound each were lighted and until they were burnt out the "jacks" or deputies of the manors had a right to sit drinking ale. The regular toasts were "To the mortal memory of King John and the real Jack of Knapp and the

real Jack of Slough." The jacks gave away the remnants to the "Second Poor" and when they had drunk as much as they liked, they departed.

King John was a merry monarch, perhaps too merry if we may credit the story that he aggravated his last illness at Swinehead Abbey, after losing his baggage in the Wellstream (Oct. 1216) by drinking too much new cider (novum cicer).

The Custumal of the Church tenants seems to have been conceived in a spirit of good cheer and rustic jollity.[1] It was a great day for the "Hundredarius" when at Christmas his "gestum" was to be two good white loaves of wheat: as much "good beer" as he liked to drink as long as daylight lasted, a good dish of beef with mustard and another "browets" (?) of fowl and cheese: also enough fuel to cook his own and the allowances of all other tenants "of ancient demesne." Here perhaps was a long continued picture of "Merry England" upon which some have cast doubts. All the parish seem to have been royally entertained. The tenants of one ferdel (10 acres ?) brought their own napkins and cups and dishes and were allowed to carry away in the napkins whatever was left.

In summer time there was a picturesque custom when in 1314, according to custom, Thomas de Mere appeared at Kyngesmede with white gloves and a white rod in his hand to superintend the mowing and hay making, estimated to last two days, and also to see to the making of the mow afterwards. He had to serve as a Praepositus (provost) or "Berebrit" and had allowances. For evil doers at North Curry there was the stock-house, under the care of the "Hundredarius" who received 4*d*. for each case, which we may hope did not fan his zeal for punishment too much.

There was one important reservation made with regard to the tenants that no man unless he was free (*liber*) could have more than one "cotsettle," if he had more, then he would have to pay rent. But at any rate this looks as if a servus had a "settle" of his own and could not be disturbed. Here was a certain fixity of tenure. Another rule was that, if a

1. Wells MSS.

nativus (a neif or servus), not a villanus,[1] died, it was the custom of the manor that the youngest son should succeed the father before any one else[2] which certainly looks as if the custom of the Manor of Taunton was extended to North Curry.[3] Further, it reveals the fact that the servus had something to bequeath and possibly, under the rule of Wells, things might have been easier than under a feudal baron who made severe restrictions about the marriage of daughters or the education of sons. At Dunster we notice that "The custom is that any man having two or three tenements and doth dwell upon one of them it is lawful to let the rest without licence."[4] This applies, apparently to copyhold tenants.

It would be an interesting task to compare the "Custumalia" of the Dean and Chapter of Wells with the "Custumalia and Rentalia" of Glaston. In both cases there was the obvious duty of keeping the drains clear towards the sea, just as now, when the "rhines" have to be scoured: there were the "chalenge londmen" or tenants of South Brent under Glaston who were bound by ancient customs to repair two days successively every year the western part of the wall at Rook's Bridge for which they were paid one penny. A ferry also was kept here, "per antiquum customarium," by one of the tenants for the conveyance of passengers. In the parishes of Congresbury, the property of Wells, and Puxton, a neighbouring parish, there used to be two large pieces of common land where a curious old custom prevailed, described by Collinson.[5] These commons were called East and West Dolemoors divided into single acres, each bearing a peculiar and different mark cut in the turf such as a horn; four oxen and a mare; two oxen and a mare; a pole axe; a cross; a dung-fork; an oven; a duck's nest; a hand-reel; a hare's

1. Spelman's Glossary.

2. *Ibidem*, p. 160.

3. *See* vol. i, p. 331, Calendar of MSS. of the D. and C. of Wells—Hist. MSS. Com., 1907.

4. Hancock's "History of Minehead," p. 211.

5. Vol. iii, p. 586.

tail. On the Saturday before old Midsummer several proprietors of estates in the parishes of Congresbury, Puxton and Week St. Lawrence, or their tenants, used to assemble on the commons. A number of apples were previously prepared, marked in the same manner as the acres of turf, which were distributed by a young lad to each of the commoners from a bag or hat. "At the close of the distribution each person repairs to his allotment, as the apple directs him, and takes possession for the ensuing year. An adjournment then takes place to the house of the Overseers of the Dolemoors, where four acres, reserved for the purpose of paying expenses, are let by inch of candle and the remainder of the day is spent in jollity."

In recent times certain allotments in the open field, called "Sharpham Rights," are still let near Wick Moor as "horse leazes" or "beast leazes" for the year. The "foreshear" is sometimes sold separately and when the hay is gathered a fresh purchaser steps in. Occasionally there are "hopping-rights" when a right is transferred from one plot to another.

There are few manors or parishes in the Valley of the Parret which surpass in a deeply historical sense Puriton and with it Downend and Bawdrip. Far back in the past, the place was, as can be shown, a port and a Parret fortification, with a long life pulsating through it. In Tudor days it was associated with Robert Blake, the great Admiral and "General-at-Sea."

In a somewhat rare little account of the history and life of the Admiral written by "A gentleman bred in the family," Blake "used to take much pleasure to walk on his lands at or near Knoll in which walks he was very contemplative." Knoll or Knowle Hill, in Bawdrip parish, commands a magnificent view of the Lower Parret and, in Blake's time, the Parret loop under the hill was still in existence. Here the ships from the Parret mouth would anchor and here the great Admiral would be in touch with all sea-faring folk who in Elizabethan times traded with France and Spain. The Blake merchantmen themselves were constantly on the waters. To hear the latest news it was better to be on the Poldens than at Plainsfield on

the Quantocks. A very touching and moving episode on the Parret occurred when Blake's brother set sail thence to seek his fortune in America. It is thus described by the author alluded to above :

" As Admiral Blake was a bachelor there are no remains of his family left but what descended from Mr. Humphrey Blake his brother, who suffered so many hardships for Non-conformity to the latter end of the reign of Charles II that he was forced to sell the estate his brother left him and transport himself and family to Carolina. As I then boarded with his eldest daughter, she took me with her when she attended her father to take Shipping at Start Point, where was then the greatest ship, which at that time, had been seen there, being above 200 tons, hired to transport this gentleman and his family and many others to the new settlement at Carolina. Very young as I was, I could not but take notice of the manly concern which Mr. Humphrey Blake showed, not without tears, at the leaving his dear country and so many dear friends as there attended him, driven from them all, purely for conscience sake. The merit of his illustrious brother was more than sufficient, one would think, to have procured for him the same favour, as a Wiltshire clothier obtained from the restored king, to be exempted from the persecution of the Spiritual Court. But it was not in the character of Mr. Blake, the admiral's brother, to stay on such terms in England, even if he could have obtained them, while his Protestant brethren were so cruelly dealt with."

" Some time after Mr. Blake's arrival at Carolina Joseph Moreton, the Governor, married his youngest daughter, Sara Blake. Mr. Humphrey Blake's only son, Joseph Blake, was, within a few years after his arrival then made Governor and behaved in that Government with general applause. It is observed of him in the History of the West Indies that, though he was a Dissenter himself and was forced to leave his country for being one, yet he was the first mover in and the first Governor that established a settled income with a very handsome allowance for a Church of England minister. Governor Blake's grandson, Joseph Blake, was one of the Lords Proprietors of Carolina when that Proprietary was sold to the

Crown and the name and family are now in that Province among the first."

The river Parret with its tidal flow has been noted for many striking episodes and historical events. Thither the Glaston pilgrims found their way and floated up to the Polden ridge : later on, the heathen Vikings came and settled at " Vikings-pill " close to Downend : Saxpole and Walpole have been the anchorages of Saxons and Welsh : after the Conquest, Norman adventurers passed from the Parret mouth to conquer South Wales and to become lords marchers there : John de Courcy with the Cogans and others adventured to Ireland and set up a new kingdom there : the humbler traders flitted up and down at all times and were found at St. Andrew's Pill at Burnham, at Prioress Pill or the Pill of the Prioress of Cannington and, higher up, at Bridgwater Castle and, far inland, at Langport.

But, there was surely no expedition more pregnant in its meaning and fertile in its results as that which took Humphrey Blake and his family to Carolina and the New World. These Somerset folk wept to see the Quantocks, where their old home lay at Plainsfield, fade from their view, as the ship of two hundred tons passed down with the tide bound for that distant bourne. It is a pity the ship's name is not recorded for it is deserving of remembrance alongside that of the *Mayflower* which took the pilgrims. " Start Point " is still to be recognised, although Steart or Start Island may have sprung into existence since Caroline times owing to the shifting of the waters. Could not a pillar or obelisk, somewhere near, commemorate the departure of the Blakes and revive the memory of Robert Blake one of our best and noblest seamen ? True, he is remembered at Bridgwater after a long interval but the mouth of the Parret may still have its sign where the Danes in King Alfred's time were beaten.

A different story is attached to Barrington Court in South Petherton during Elizabethan days. It was at that time in the possession of Charles Arundel, a stormy petrel in his day, Hispaniolised Englishman, a Papist traitor and an enemy of England. It must be said that all of the Arundels were not

cut according to this pattern, for some of them, indeed his own brother, had the spirit and patriotism of Howard of Effingham. Barrington Court is to-day part of the property of the "National Trust" but it may be questioned whether its history, first as a possession of the Daubeny family, descended from Robert de Todenei, who came to England with the Conqueror, the possessors of South Petherton Manor as well as Barrington and Southarp and Chillington, is sufficiently known. Giles Daubeney was one of the chief counsellors of Henry VII and Constable of Bristol and Bridgwater Castles. Henry Daubeny was created Earl of Bridgwater and from him the Manor of South Petherton descended to Thomas Arundel.

Although a Roger Arundel at Domesday held manors in Somerset, amongst which was Fiddington, close to Nether Stowey, it was in Cornwall where the Arundels were best known, *viz.* at Lanherne, Trerice and Tolverne. Charles Arundel was son of Sir Thomas Arundel, a younger brother of Sir John Arundel of Lanherne. Sir Thomas was well-known at Court in the reign of Henry VIII, and, by his marriage with Margaret Howard, sister of the ill-fated Katherine Howard, stood in the somewhat dangerous relationship of brother-in-law to the king. In Wiltshire Sir Thomas was Lord of Wardour Castle purchased of Sir Fulke Greville, but he inherited lands in South Petherton and Barrington through his uncle, Lord Daubeny, who had married Elizabeth Arundel. Also, in 1527, Sir Thomas had obtained from Henry Percy, the Earl of Northumberland, the office of Receiver of the Castle of Stoke Courcy, Radway Fitzpayne, Cheddon Fitzpayne, Staple-Fitzpayne, Wyke-Fitzpayne all in connection with the Honour and Barony of Stoke-Courcy.

Sir Thomas also held the office of Constable and Gatekeeper of the Castle of Taunton, an ancient office dating back to Domesday as we have seen when Geoffrey was Constabularius.[1] Sir Thomas was a Roman Catholic and as if to prove that the legatees of monastic property were not always Protestants he had managed to secure for himself the reversion of Stavordale Priory near Wincanton, once the property of

1. Eyton's "Somerset Domesday," vol. ii, p. 163.

Taunton Priory, and of Shaftesbury Abbey, the well-known foundation of King Alfred. But his downfall came in 1549 when, in company with his brother, John Arundel of Lanherne, he was accused of being mixed up in the rebellion of Humphrey Arundel his uncle and Governor of St. Michael's Mount. This insurrection was said to have been due to enclosure of common lands and Humphrey Arundel marched on Exeter and besieged it without success. At the bottom of the Arundel rebellion lay some disputes, also, of a religious character. Sir Thomas was arrested on January the 30th, 1549, and being committed to the Tower was executed and his estates confiscated, the fate also of Humphrey, his uncle.

Charles Arundel, therefore, inherited some very stormy antecedents in those troublous times. His elder brother, Matthew,[1] had found himself reinstated in Wardour Castle by the favour of Queen Mary and was so far trusted in Somerset as to be Constable and gate-keeper of Taunton Castle as his father before him. Charles, also, if we may follow an Inquisition p.m.[2] held at Wincanton after his death on the eleventh of March, 1588, received the manor and hundred of South Petherton and all that belonged to them, by the favour of Queen Mary who naturally would sympathise with the Arundels. In letters patent given at the "castrum de Farnham," July 2nd, 1553, this Queen had also made some provision out of South Petherton for Dame Margaret the widow of Thomas Arundel; also, for the education of Charles Arundel and for the two daughters, Dorothy and Jane, when of age, granting them £500 each. Charles Arundel had lived to come into this South Petherton property and in 1580 had a dispute with Sir John Clifton there about the privileges of Barrington Court and Manor.[3] In this suit Charles Arundel was plaintiff and Sir John Clifton Knight defendant and the main point to be decided was whether Cleyhill and its woods belonged to Barrington Court.

1. Dr. Oliver's "Collections," p. 76.

2. Chancery, vol. 216, no. 89.

3. Exchequer Depositions by Commission, 22 & 23 Eliz. Michaelmas. Nov. 11th.

In 35 Queen Elizabeth (1593) the manor and park of Barrington, 200 acres of pasture, 1200 acres of wood, 300 acres of moor with appurtenances in the Forest of Neroche, belonging to the manor and the capital messuage and park of Barrington, three water mills, two dove houses (*Columbaria*), all messuages, buildings, lands and tenements within the said park, as also a messuage and curtilage called the Hinde-Howse in Barrington, adjoining the park were held by Sir John Clifton in chief. The Hundred of South Petherton, held first by the Crown and then by the Lords Daubeny was still vested in Lord Arundel in Collinson's time (1790).

Charles Arundel figured for a time at the Court of Queen Elizabeth but afterwards "for his devotion he went to visit the holy places of Rome and from Rome passed to see the King of Spain and to do his duty unto him for that he had been his godfather and had given him the name of his father, Charles the Emperor." King Philip received him with great love and favour, making him knight and assigning him also four score French crowns every month towards his maintenance. The sympathies of Charles Arundel were entirely on the side of Mary Queen of Scots and he is said to have lent her money. That he was a schemer and traitor there is no doubt. Here are extracts from public records which throw a lurid light upon his designs, being the reports of Queen Elizabeth's spies: State Papers Domestic. Addenda. September, 1585.

"The Pope is more desirous of being persuaded of Charles Arundel as he has been commended to him by the Duke of Guise for a meet man to have the conduct of an army to invade his native country and Arundel suggested certain plots how the country might be invaded. He goes to the Duke of Guise's camp next Friday."

December 16th, 1585. Thomas Rogers to Walsingham. "Charles Arundel after staying here ten or twelve days departed again to the Duke of Guise. Cannot get some money. Paget and Thomas Morgan hinder it. A second cause. For furnishing three or four ships of war about St. Malo wherein he and Westmoreland with Captain Gaye and 600–700 men intended to go secretly into England upon Somersetshire there to burn and rob and take some gentlemen of account out of

their houses." It would be interesting to know who these gentlemen were.

December 28th, 1585. "Charles Arundel is here and has brought both his two men, horses and all his apparel. Since his coming he has conferred with Captain Gaye and Francesco for 2000 men to prosecute his roving attempt upon England and they have promised him that more or less shall be ready when he demands them. I think he will set out about St. Malo."

Addenda, August, 1585. Thomas Rogers to Walsingham. "Charles Arundel who is now with the Duke of Guise shall conduct part of the army upon the west parts of England."

"The Earl of Westmoreland is promised 10,000 men and 100,000 crowns by the Duke of Guise to invade the north parts of England about Westmoreland.

"Thomas Throgmorton to invade the south parts with Spanish forces."

"The Duke of Guise to invade England by way of Scotland and other forces to enter Ireland. All the Papists at Rouen expect to be in England shortly."

From other information it transpired that Father Parsons (*Perino*), the famous Jesuit, born at Nether Stowey, was secretly in the camp of Parma and that shortly he would go to the Pope about the plot. There were 80,000 men, 250 ships, 80 galleys in Spain preparing for the expeditions, 12,000 of the soldiers being Tudescos (Germans), 10,000 Italians, 10,000 Almains (Germans), on their way to Normandy.

From the above the general scheme of the Spanish invasion may be conjectured, three years before the Armada was actually launched in 1588. It may be noted how many of the soldiers were Germans : also that Ireland as usual was the weak spot.

That the blow might fall upon West Somerset and the Valley of the Parret under the leadership of Charles Arundel is interesting. Many of the gentry were Roman Catholics and might sympathise with the movement and the Arundel family in addition to South Petherton and Barrington had influence at Selworthy and Luccombe near Minehead and also at Clatworthy on the Brendons. Charles Arundel died December

9th, 1587, before the great adventure, when "Deus afflavit et dissipavit" and cast some of the Armada ships upon the coast of Scotland where, to-day, divers are rescuing some treasure trove at Tobermory Bay. The nephew of Charles Arundel was Thomas Arundel called "The Valiant," who entered the Austrian service under the Archduke Matthias, brother of the Emperor Rudolphus II.[1]

In the Inquisition p.m. quoted above the jurors record the fact that Charles Arundel died without heirs on December 9th, 1587, at Paris, outside the realm "in partibus Galliae sub obedientia Henrici (IV) Gallorum regis," *i.e.* a subject of the French king and that Matthew his brother was next heir. It may be possible here to note the play of religious partisanship, Matthew Arundel having been knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1574, and being restored in full to Wardour Castle in 1575. Sir John Clifton with whom Charles Arundel had a dispute about Barrington and Clayhill was also knighted by Queen Elizabeth at Bristol in 1574, together with Portman, Horner, Rogers, Sydenham and Stowell. At this time she was a visitor at Longleat, the seat of Sir John Thynne[2] and she evidently thought that the Protestants of Somerset should be encouraged at that time. No doubt, behind the pageants and shows of Bristol there was a political purpose underlying the great queen's progress. There is nothing new under the sun even in conspiracy. In the Great War Germans had their eyes upon peaceful Somerset and strange lights and signals were seen on the Quantocks visible across the Channel, the object being to guide submarines in attacks upon Avonmouth and Cardiff traffic. On the Brendons Count Hochberg, a Silesian noble, had lived at Croydon Hall, a good observation point. There is still a mystery of Croydon Hall.

The son of Sir Matthew Arundel (d. 1598 and buried at Tisbury) was another Sir Thomas Arundel created Baron Arundel by King James 4th May, 1605, a man greatly distinguished for his foreign service and Count of the holy Roman Empire. His daughter, Ann Arundel, married Cecil Calvert

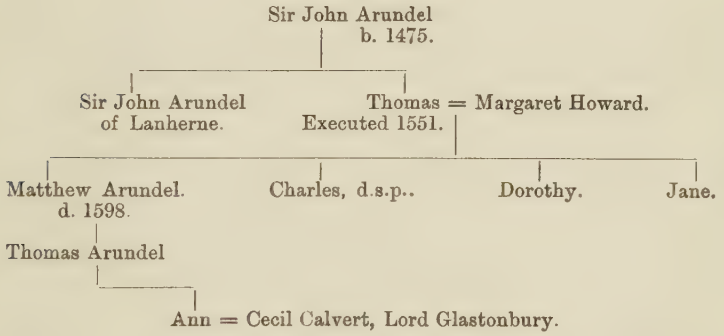
1. Dr. Oliver's "Collections."
2. Stradling Letters, p. 124–5.

the Roman Catholic, Lord Baltimore. In June, 1632, King Charles I granted him the proprietorship of the Province of Maryland, in company with Andrew White and four other Jesuits and two hundred Roman Catholic settlers. At the same time he created him "Lord Glastonbury." For centuries, it would appear, the Arundels adhered to the old faith but one wonders what was in the mind of "Lord Glastonbury" when with his wife he emigrated to the New World. Was his ambition to restore in Maryland some ideal of Glastonbury? a renovation across the Atlantic of some spiritual "Pergama rediviva?" His father-in-law Sir George Calvert and M.P. for Oxford, took his title from Baltimore, Co. Longford in Ireland and was a pervert. It is said that Mass was first celebrated in St. Clement's, now called Herons Island in the Patuxent River on Lady Day, 1634. There is a deep historical contrast between Humphrey Blake's venture in Carolina and Lord Glastonbury's Colony in Maryland, so called from Maria Henrietta, Queen of Charles I. Some American local historian might trace the progress of these respective ventures.

It may be of some interest to add here that the last Lord Arundel of Wardour died recently at Fiddington (the Domesday Manor of Roger) close to Nether Stowey. It is believed that the ring of Mary, Queen of Scots, bequeathed to a Lady Arundel at the time of her execution, used to be in the possession of this last Lord Arundel's family at Cannington. Near Nettlecombe, at Bardon, papers of great interest referring to Mary Queen of Scots have been discovered recently. The Leigh family, the owners of Bardon for many years, are unable to account for their presence there. Could they have come through the Arundels of Trerice who owned Clatworthy, Selworthy, Luccombe, or, perhaps, through Dorothy Arundel, the sister of Charles Arundel, a fervent Roman Catholic, and a devotee of Father Cornelius, a Jesuit priest, who wandered over Dorset and Somerset, when "wanted" as a massing priest by the Elizabethan myrmidons. It was a risky life in those days and priests' holes were not uncommon in old country houses.[1] Things had come to a pretty pass when Sir John

1. Foley's "Jesuit Records."

Stowell of Cothelstone was commissioned, as we gather from Privy Council records, to visit and examine the rooms and libraries of neighbouring gentry. The Arundels often carried their lives in their hands but, at this distance of time, whatever we think of their mistaken politics, they were gallant English gentlemen. The cause and system some members espoused were both thoroughly bad.



In this little digression the supremely interesting point of general history arises. Was West Somerset and the Valley of the Parret really a Spanish objective before the Armada started in 1588 ? It looks like it. Here it was thought was a vulnerable spot and the idea is recurrent. Father Parsons of Nether Stowey, the most famous Jesuit of his day, the friend of King Philip, his country's greatest enemy, may have been privy to a Somerset invasion. Maybe it originated in his fertile brain.[1] Barrington Court is, as above stated, national property and pilgrims who wander thither may think of its former owner, Charles Arundel, and the whole story of Elizabethan plotting and counter-plotting. It would be instructive if the " National Trust " could get a property held by Robert Blake when the recollections of local and general history would reveal other thoughts and other motives and the maritime daring of the great Commonwealth General at Sea who, no matter what parties and party squabbles

1. *See* Greswell's " Land of Quantock."

meant at home was sternly determined " not to let foreigners fool us." A truly patriotic man! An honest Englishman and " Nationalist," not a vague and disloyal " Internationalist " or Jesuit, who are nothing if not " International " in some visionary and unattainable Utopia.

Apart from purely religious reasons which have caused people to migrate from the Homeland for conscience sake in Stuart times there was a widespread desire to colonise and to adventure in the New World in Elizabethan times. This desire was very plainly shown in what we have described as " Ancient Dumnonia," from the Avon to the Tamar, from Bristol to Plymouth and, perhaps, the movement was in accordance with the age-long instincts of the Dumnonii always a seafaring folk and Dumnonia is really only Devon writ large in ancient history. In the East of England there are no two colonising towns so notable as Bristol and Plymouth ; no two such men as Raleigh and Hakluyt. The colonising zeal of Somerset was many sided. Bancroft, the American historian, has noted how Ferdinando Gorges, a gentleman of Wraxall, near Bristol, had sketched the outlines of a New Somersetshire : how Dr. Lake, Bishop of Bath and Wells (1569–1626), sympathised with the colonising movement so much as to wish he could be a colonist himself. So did Popham the chief justice. Long afterwards, Bishop Berkeley (1685–1753), the idealist, was in favour of American colonisation.

On the prospect of landing arts and learning in America the Bishop of Cloyne wrote :

> " Then shall be sung another golden age
> The rise of Empire and of arts,
> The good and great inspiring epic rage
> The wisest heads and noblest hearts."

John Locke, born at Wrington, near Bristol (1632–1704), drew up those famous " Constitutions of Carolina " and was Secretary himself to the " Lords Proprietors " : Samuel Daniel, born at Taunton and buried at Beckington (1562–1619), tutor to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, a near contemporary of William Shakespeare (1564–1616), the poet-laureate of the kingdom after Spenser, the composer of numerous masques

for Court festivities, inspector of the children of the Queen's Revels, wrote thus :

> " Who in time knows whither we may vent
> The treasures of our tongue ? To what strange shores
> This gain of our best glory shall be sent
> To enrich unknowing nations with our stores ?
> What worlds, in the yet unformed Occident
> May 'come refined with the accents that are ours."

Whatever we may think about the " accent " of the " well of English undefiled " in Transatlantic climes, as spoken more especially by the vast polyglottous crowd who have settled there from all parts of Europe, exceeding in their picturesque variety the population of any other Kingdom or Empire, there is no doubt about the undoubted fact that from small beginnings the language of Shakespeare, Spenser, Daniel is now spoken by one hundred and ten millions. No such linguistic marvel has yet arisen in the world's history !

Untouched by thoughts of maritime enterprise and lying in a peaceful little backwater of existence one of the most remarkable manors on the Quantocks is that of East Quantockshead, which has never been bought or sold since the Conquest,[1] the present holders, the Luttrells of Dunster Castle, having inherited it by the marriage of Geoffrey Luttrell with Trethesenta, the heiress of the Paganel family, the Domesday holders. This Geoffrey Luttrell died 2 Henry III (1218). Dunster Castle came into the possession of this family by purchase, *i.e.* when Elizabeth Luttrell bought it from Lady Mohun.[2] The male line of the Luttrells came to an end in 1747. A sole heiress married Henry Fownes in 1747.

The parish of East Quantockshead lies between the Severn Sea and the Quantock Hills (formerly a Saxon Forest) and the division along the hills is clearly indicated by the very old and deep hill-hedge running round the boundary. On the east the parish boundary is a deep lane called " Fifteen Foot," running from the sea to the hill and still recognisable. On

1. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. lxvi, p. 51.
2. 50 Edw. III, *i.e.* 1377.

the west lies West Quantockshead or St. Audries Manor so called from St. Ethelreda to whom the church was dedicated. St. Audries, the present home of the Acland-Hoods, and originally the possession of William de Mohun, passed into the hands of the Malet family and was inherited by them for many centuries.

The natural boundaries of East Quantockshead being such as they are and so clearly defined by nature it is interesting to refer to the Domesday account of it. This account obviously excludes the Quantocks and relates to the manor lying between the hill-hedge and the sea. This is seven hides and if we adopt the Glastonbury standard of land measurement as stated in the "Liber de Soliaco" (1100–1200), and take the hide as equivalent to 160 acres the measurement would be 1120 acres. Comparing this with the modern tithe map (*c.* 1837), the details are:

	A.	R.	P.
Arable	699	2	4
Orchards	32	0	39
Meadow	273	0	35
Cottage Gardens . .	38	2	30
Woodlands . . .	44	0	15
Glebe	28	1	21
	1116	0	24

This total is not far removed from the Domesday total. It may be noted that the total of Woodlands in the Tithe Survey amounts to 99*a.* 0*r.* 15*p.*, but this includes fifty-five acres of Quantock wood and coppice, in Birchen Wood (20*a.* 2*r.* 0*p.*); in Round Hill Coppice (16*a.* 2*r.* 0*p.*); and Lady's Edge (8*a.* 1*r.* 0*p.*), besides patches of "timber." The 44*a.* 0*r.* 15*p.* of "nemus" would include what is known as East Wood, Knoll Wood and possibly Marshwood and Norwood, a tract near the sea. In the Exon. Domesday the "nemus" is given as fifty acres, not far removed from the forty-four acres given above, a proof that woods are very old.

The parish of Kilve adjoining East Quantockshead shows a Domesday acreage of 800 (five hides), a Tithe Commutation

measurement of 890 acres, including " Hill " and " Parleston " where the difference may easily be accounted for. Holford parish shows 260 at Domesday and 250 in 1841. Holford is a composite parish in Whitley Hundred and another portion of it, Winsors farm, shows 80 acres to Domesday 80 acres : another section, Corewell or Currill, 20 acres to about 18 acres. In Kilton parish a portion known now as " The Hides," held by " Ralph " at Domesday, shows 160 acres (a hide) to 160 acres to-day. Perhaps there can be no better example of the ancient hide. The tract is there for all to see lying between the Quantock Hills and Portway Lane, with both arable and pasture in it. In all the above instances there would appear to be no Quantock Hill included in the manors below them. Domesday surveyors did not include it.

The above figures are interesting as it would appear that, excluding the Quantock hills, the hidable extent of East Quantockshead and the other parishes and, therefore, their cultivable and taxable extent, was almost exactly the same in 1086 as it is now. On the sea boundary it is possible that a few acres have been washed away by the encroaching waves. We seem also to have a precise dictum here for the extent of the hide. In other parishes such as North Curry, much of this area is waste and unredeemed, and we hardly know what value to assign to the hide. The conditions vary here. But in East Quantockshead there can be little change. As we cast our eyes over the valley from the hill-hedge, above Knoll wood, we feel sure that the view is very much like what it was in 1086, allowing for woods in Norwood and Marshwood and allowing, also, for fences where of old were open fields. Even then we can roughly guess that the pasturage and meadows lay by the sea, the arable on the higher slopes. There were twenty plough lands and so the oxen must have often been in evidence toiling up and down goaded by the rustic. Possibly there was more life visible at Domesday than to-day.

Another question arises and it is how the portion of " Canntok Foresta " came to be incorporated in East Quantockshead and the same question occurs in the case of Kilve, Kilton, Holford and other parishes ? Are the present boundaries such

as "Longstone" between Kilve and East Quantockshead, Bicknoller Post, Halsway Cross, Triscombe Stone, Lady's Fountain, Lousy Thorn, Longstone, and many others Præ-Domesday or Post-Domesday? In many cases the boundaries of the parishes follow the old roads such as, notably, the "Stowey Herepath" and the Drove," leading to Bagborough. It seems reasonable to suppose that each parish had its portion of hill and common and, further than this, that each important homestead or ancient tenement had its separate common, far back in Celtic or British times. True that the Saxon Forest or Saxon Dominici Bosci" might have spread over the Quantock uplands but this would not interfere with pasturage of sheep or indeed with occasional patches of cultivation. That these patches did exist is evident from signs of furrows on such places as West Hill, but of course they had to be surrounded with a fence to keep the animals off that grassed on the commons. That this kind of sporadic cultivation did take place is also evident from a suit of law between Humphrey Blake and the Duke of Northumberland, lord of Stoke Courcy and of Wick Fitzpayne, during Stuart times, in which allusion is made to fences that were put up for some time and then allowed to go down. They were called "quick" or "living." Further, Humphrey Blake maintained that his title to Plainsfield, originally a part of the Nether Stowey Barony and of the possessions of Lord Audley, who forfeited his estates after the Cornish rebellion, was held of the king "as of the Manor of Hampton Court." In 31 Henry VIII there was an Act for making Hampton Court a manor or honor with divers manors attached, a promiscuous grouping of scattered properties in many parts of the land. At Domesday Wyke Tything and part of Over Stowey was made over to William de Falaise, lord of Stoke (Courcy) Castle, but we may presume that this portion, being really part of the Royal Forest, was always held of the Crown, and that the title always lay there.

The commons on the Quantocks could never be treated as "Lord's Waste" from time to time. When large estates or baronies were split up and sold, the result was "broken manors."

In East Quantockshead there was a "Peculiar Common" which went with the manor. In the dower portion of Margery Luttrell, 1273, there is assigned to her the run over "160 acres of common pasture on Cantok," apparently this "Peculiar Common." In the same deed there is an allusion to nine acres of land in la Knolle and six acres of wood in Mersh wood. How and why this "Peculiar Common" was created is uncertain. But as far as East Quantockshead is concerned there could not have been "a broken manor."

The church is calculated to hold 125 and the Domesday population with twenty-five householders represented 125; to-day it is 149. The stream still drives the old mill below the church, where in old days the lord exacted his dues and, along the streams, high up and close to Townsend, there grew formerly an offspring of the famous Glastonbury thorn, overhanging the bank. This within the memory of men living a few years ago! Truly a very ancient and picturesque place! At the old court house, close to the church, court leets were held up to recent times. Some of the Luttrell incumbents lived to a great age. There was an Alexander Fownes Luttrell who held the living from 1779–1816, succeeded, after the interval of a single year, by another Alexander Fownes Luttrell, 1817–1889, (a clergyman beloved of his parishioners), the two holding the Rectory for 110 years.

There was an Alexander Luttrell, patron of the living in 1328 and there is still an Alexander Luttrell at the old court as lord of the manor and patron, also the lord of Dunster Castle. As a further instance of longevity it may be added that another Alexander Luttrell, vicar of Minehead, held the living for sixty-seven years dying in 1899 at the age of ninety-two. Such incumbencies are a protest against the quick changes of modern life. They are restful spaces and they were certainly welcome to the old clerks and parishioners of the day. There was benevolent and kindly rule in the parish and discipline followed a nod or wise suggestion. Old folk at Minehead still remember a Sunday when the Rev. Alexander Luttrell and the Rev. J. Russell both officiated in the church of St. Michael and regard it as having been an exceptional occasion when two exceptional West Country parsons were

seen and heard. The Luttrells have generously helped the Church.

"Edstock and Beer" in Cannington Hundred and lying close to Cannington Knoll and the old Saxon Herepath provide another interesting study in the history of manors. Under the name of Ichetoche and Bera, respectively, they appear the in Domesday, the first held by Leno the king's almonee, second by Roger de Corcelles. Ichetoche becomes the portion of the de Wiggeberg family of South Petherton who were king's door-keepers (*ostiarii*). Beer or Bera (akin to Anglo-Saxon berton or barton, corn village) gave a name to a family who lived there of whom one was Prioress of Cannington nunnery. Possibly the abbot of Glastonbury, Richard Beere (d. 1522) was one of this family but the name frequently occurs in the Wells MSS.

The Poulet family succeeded the Bere family and made it one of their principal seats. Edstock and Beer were brought close together when Sir William Paulet of Bere founded a new chapel at Edstock in honour of the Virgin Mary, side by side with the old one. It was a chantry for one priest to celebrate mass and Sir W. Paulet endowed it with land in Edeston, (Idson), Stoke Courcy, Pederham near Comwich, Sedernmede, Edstock itself and Cannington (3 Henry V). The first incumbent was Thomas Spreth instituted Jan. 28th, 1427; the last, Thomas Shakyll instituted May 17th, 1524, the number of incumbents having been thirteen. This chantry was dissolved like the rest and in the list is described as "The Free Chapel of Ichestock within Cannington." If a free chapel it must have been in the first instance a king's chapel before the endowment of Sir W. Paulet and this takes its date far back. Tradition has it that here was a king's hunting lodge and, if so, the chapel may have resembled Durleigh in North Petherton, which, in a similar way, was outside the bishop's jurisdiction. During their long history neither Edstock or Bere seem to have had a parish church. They are now part of Chilton Trinity and come under St. Mary's, Bridgwater. It is the antiquity of this lonely little chapel, long since a picturesque ruin, that challenges our enquiries. It is surely out of the ordinary in

every way. Its proximity to the Saxon Herepath and also to the mouth and estuary of the Parret give it a channel association. The old chapel of Edstock might have been a hermit's abode like Nedstock (St. Neot's Stock) in Cornwall or the shrine of a S. Guerir, past which a king at times might go when hunting and at which, like King Alfred, he might offer his prayers. Shakyll the last chantry priest on the Paulet foundation interests us as a priest who saved his all to restore the Abbey of Glaston, a vain effort but one which we all might wish had been accomplished, even if the old Abbey and its books had been the only salvage.

The manor of Bere was sold in 1557 to John Bowyer and descended to Edmund Bowyer when it was purchased by Edward Colston and by him appropriated towards the support of Colston's school and hospital in Bristol. In Hugo's notices of Cannington Priory we read[1] : " A mansion house and lands at Cannington of the annual value of £vi xv*s.* vi*d.* belonging to the Free Chapel of Ichestoke was granted to Sir John Thynne and Laurence Hide." In the " Proportion Roll " (1772) Edstock and Beer are classified as a tything by itself and extra-parochial : in the census of 1841 as " a hamlet." Thus two Domesday manors become a hamlet. In 1894 Beer Manor Farm was occupied by a tenant, Mr. Davey, who described the places as a parish in which he had to fulfil all duties of an overseer, guardian, etc. The extent of the farm was 210 acres with an additional 150 acres in the neighbourhood which would probably represent in these two sections the two Domesday manors of Bera and Ichestoche. He had heard the tradition of the place having been a king's hunting-lodge : also traditions about the Romans attached to a field called Abingers. This is interesting if we suppose that the Romans had crossed the Parret and had visited Wick Barrow and left a coin of Constantine in the Bronze Age tumulus.

Close to Edstock was Edeveston or Idson an ancient Domesday manor, now in Stoke Courcy, and for some years the home of the Strecche family, from Edward III to Richard II.[2]

1. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. xi.
2. Wells MSS., vol. (1907). Hist. MSS. Com.

The Strecche (Strachey ?) family lived also at Nether Stowey and Comwich, an agreement being made at Michaelmas, 9 Edward I, between Robert Strecche of Comyz and William de Bere about a dower house for Agatha Strecche.[1]

Many of the Domesday manors have disappeared altogether or are remembered only by the presence of a small barton or "linhay" or some place-name that refuses to be extirpated. The "Cantoche" or Quantock of Domesday, part of Alured's spacious heritage and attached formerly to Nether Stowey, is remembered now only by a barn and wood. Just in the same way the Gournay Manor House and the Tilly Manor House in West Harptree are used simply for farm purposes.

Near Dodington, "Newhall," the Domesday portion of the Paganel family, is now only a dismantled farm-yard. Ailly or Aley Manor and park at Over Stowey, which used to pay suit and service at the hall of Stoke Courcy Castle[2] is known only now as "Ely Green," lately a public-house and part of Wyke tything. Near this spot "Quantock Lodge," the residence of the late Edward Stanley, was built and is now a convalescent home for tuberculosis patients. In Merridge a vacant spot at the bottom of "Courtway hill," leading up to Bincombe, marks the place where, perhaps, the Hill or Fichet family lived. Down by the river Parret itself in Paulet parish is "Gants," or "Gaunt's Farm," which has nothing to do with John of Gaunt, (as some would have it), but takes its name from the Gaunts of Bristol, known at Stockland Gaunts, just as Gournay Street in Cannington is named from the Gournays.

There is no doubt about the prestige and antiquity of King Ina's Palace in South Petherton, and Wigborough in the same place is probably the scene of a former battle between Danes and Saxons, being the same place as Wiganbeorg. The Domesday tenant held it by the serjeantry of being the king's attendant, as noted above.

Cannington Park, now the home of the Bouverie family,

1. Wells MSS.
2. Hill Chartulary.

recalls the name of their ancestor John Pym (1584–1643), son of Alexander Pym, of Brymore, the great parliamentary statesman. The Pyms once owned Woollavington close to Puriton and Bawdrip, Blake's favourite abode, and the Pyms took a keen interest in the colonisation of the West Indies.[1]

Nether Stowey, once a "Caput Baroniae" and surrounded by two deer parks, one for red and the other for fallow deer, the abode in Somerset of the de Candos, Columbers and Audley families in turn, is a dwelling-house and farm shorn of its former magnificence.[2] It was the abode of the great James Lord Audley, the hero of Poictiers, about whose valour and that of his attendant squires, Froissart tells us so much. The Audley Barony (1297) was of great antiquity, Nicholas de Audley being the first Baron of Audley, a Staffordshire parish on the road between Nantwich and Newcastle. James, Lord Audley, dying 16th August, 1369, was buried in the church of St. James, Audley.[3] In 1392 the Audley estates and barony passed to John Touchet, who died in 1458, and continued in direct line to James Touchet, who was attainted and beheaded in 1497 for joining in the Cornish rebellion against Henry VII. Like the hero of Poictiers this James, Lord Audley lived at Nether-Stowey,[4] a favourite abode which with the rest of his possessions was forfeited and then restored to John Touchet, Lord Audley. Amongst their widely spread properties the Audley barons held Heleigh Castle, about three miles from Audley, in Staffordshire; also Red Castle, in Shropshire. The hero of Poictiers presented Robert Crosse to Spaxton in 1362 and is there called "Dominus de rubro Castro (Red-castle) and de Helegh." Robert Crosse came from Witherigge, Devon.

The Stanleys were a younger branch of the Audley family and there was, indeed, no family of greater renown than the Audleys.[5] The last Lord Audley is mentioned in an account

1. Bouverie Papers. Hist. MSS. Com., 1887.
2. *See* Greswell's "Land of Quantock," p. 119.
3. Pennant's "Chester to London," p. 58.
4. *Collinson*, vol. iii, p. 553.
5. *Quarterly Review*, vol. 98, p. 308.

written by Lord Beaconsfield of Queen Victoria's accession in which he payed obeisance as Premier Baron of England. The eldest representative of the old line was James Touchet, son of John Touchet of Manchester (died s.p.), whose widow, Mrs. James Touchet, lived at Kensal Lodge in early Victorian days and was the hostess of a literary set including Lord Byron, the poet Rogers and many others.[1] Mrs. Touchet, *neé* Eliza Buckley, was a talented woman and of brilliant conversational powers. The Barony of Audley is now in abeyance. As a matter of local interest it may be noted that the Barony of Stowey in the persons of the Audley-Touchet family and that of Stoke Courcy in the persons of the de Courcy family of Kinsale represented the premier Baronies of England and Ireland, the former created in 1297, the latter in 1189.

Dodington Hall, the abode of Dodo Forestarius of old and of the Dodington family for centuries, of which Sir Francis was a most conspicuous member and a noted Royalist leader, has long been a farm-house. Fairfield House, the old home of the Vernay, Palmer and Acland families, famed in Elizabethan days for sending a Palmer to accompany Sir Francis Drake round the world, has been deserted of late years. So, too, has the ancient manor house of Alfoxton, the home of the St. Albyn family. The Pophams of Bagborough are no longer there and their manor-houses both at Wellington and North Petherton have passed into other hands; conspicuous as the family was in Elizabethan and subsequent times.[2]

Halsey Manor, if we may believe the Rev. F. Warre of Bishop's Lydeard, of an ancient Somerset family, was once the favourite hunting seat of Cardinal Beaufort, the manor belonging to the Stradling family of St. Donats. The "Priest's Walk" from Halsey to Crowcombe may have been used by the famous cardinal. The Halsey Chapel is that ruin now transferred to Crowcombe Park.

Cothelston Manor, inhabited for centuries by the Stawell family, of which Sir John Stawell, knighted by Queen Eliza-

2. "Life of William Harrison Ainsworth, by S. M. Ellis, vol. i, p. 230 (1910)."

2. Greswell's "Land of Quantock," chap. xviii—Elizabethan Days.

beth, was one, was the seat of a family of Royalists. The manor-house is well preserved and is noted for its herd of Red Devons who graze peacefully enough where war's alarms were once heard and where the barbarities of Judge Jefferies were rehearsed at that well-known gateway.

Each manor merits a history; each holds some romance. Orchard Wyndham, at Williton, and Orchard Portman, near Taunton, carry their own story with them. Nettlecombe Court with its still existing and very ancient deer park, the home of the Raleigh and Trevelyan families, is an ancient Tudor house full of memories just as its muniment room is stored with archives. "Raleigh's Cross" and "Raleigh's Down" are two place-names which have clung to the land just as "Dane Knap" above the house takes us back to Danish inroads, probably made from Watchet beneath. Next to it is Combe Sydenham with traditions of Drake and the Sydenham family known at Dulverton and near Bridgwater. The present Lord Sydenham is, we believe, a scion of this West Country family. Curry Malet and Shepton Malet remind us of the Malet of Domesday, the Conqueror's companion. Enmore Castle was a principal abode and the place again recalls Earl Rochester and the restoration. For Rochester married an heiress of the Malet family so widely spread over Somerset. They seem to have succeeded to the Courcelles in so many manors. Halswell, the old home of the Kemys Tynte family recalls Captain Keymis, the companion of Sir Walter Raleigh on his ill-starred Orinoco voyage. Lord Wharton now reigns at Halswell.

Spaxton and Charlinch, now small villages, abound in Elizabethan memories. The chief hero was Sir Robert Crosse, born about 1537 and descended from an old Charlinch family. He commanded the barque *Bond* in Sir Francis Drake's expedition to the West Indies in 1585–6, the land forces being under the command of Christopher Carleil a Spaxton man and an old and experienced officer both by sea and land, a friend of Edmund Spenser, the poet.[1] Sir R. Crosse was M.P. for Minehead in 1586 and was in the Cadiz expedition in 1587,

1. Spenser's Works, Globe edition. Macmillan (1873), p. xxxiii.

serving as captain in Drake's land army and was sent home with despatches, taking two prize ships of six hundred and eight hundred tons laden with Malvoisin raisins which Drake had captured. In 1588 he commanded the *Hope* and engaged the Spanish ship *Maria*, 665 tons, twenty-four guns with one hundred and seventy-two soldiers and one hundred sailors which foundered after his attack. In 1589 he had charge of the reserve fleet of store ships for the Portugal expedition, in 1591 he was in command of the *Bonaventura*, in Lord Thomas Howard's fleet. His greatest exploit was in 1592 when, as Vice-Admiral of Raleigh's squadron, he was the first to board the great carrack *Madre de Dios* of 1,500 tons with a cargo valued at £150,000. Later on he was approached with a a view to joining in Essex's mad scheme to seize the person of the Queen in 1601 but he denounced the plot.[1] Curiously enough it was Sir Robert Crosse's fate to marry a Roman Catholic lady of property, sister of Captain Marchant. There is a pitiable letter of his to Sir R. Cecil saying her property was like to be taken from her, as a recusant, and that he had done his best to change her mind : that my Lord of Canterbury had visited her twice but to no effect. Later, he appeals for some reward for his services and, failing this, for leave to quit the country to hide his poverty. But that same year he died in the house of Sir Thomas Mildmay, of Moulsham Abbey.[2]

In Somerset and in the Valley of the Parret and even on the peaceful land of Quantock there were plots and counter plots. There was, as above mentioned, the great Arundel plot ; Sir W. Waad writing to Secretary Lord Cecil says that Miles Gerrard, living at Trent, was " wholly Jesuited."[3] Sir W. Raleigh writing to Sir Robert Cecil on April 14th, 1594, from Sherborne, says " This night the 13th of April, wee have taken a notabell Jesuit in the Lady Storton's house—wife to the old Sir John Arundel—with his cope and bulles. Hee calls hymeself John Mooney, but hee is an Irishman and a notabell stout villain."

1. Greswell's " Land of Quantock "—Elizabethan Days.
2. " Life of Sir W. Raleigh," by Edward Edwards. Macmillan (1868).
3. *Ibidem*, vol. ii, p. 457.

Sir W. Raleigh's letter written to the Lords of the Council, 25th November, 1595, reporting upon the best means of naval defences for Somerset, Devon and Cornwall is historic, and reveals the weak spots and marks the inadequacy of the defence of those days.[1]

Sir Robert Crosse was not the only notable member of the Crosse family. A younger brother Andrew, described as of Spaxton, purchased a portion of the manor of Broomfield about 1629. Either he or his son Andrew, of Fyne Court, Broomfield (Somerset Visitation, 1672), rebuilt the old manor-house. From his descendant Richard Crosse, some time Vicar of Cannington (1735), and Mary, daughter of Lord Saye and Sele, was descended Andrew Crosse the philosopher (1784–1855). Richard Crosse was presented to the living by the Chancellor of Oxford, Lord Clifford, the patron, being a Papist.

William Crosse, brother of Andrew, is described in the Visitation of 1672 as of Blackmore in Cannington. He married Grace, daughter of John Perry, Halse. The only child from this marriage was Grace who married William Strachey, collaterally descended from Sir John Strachie, knt. (1377). In a Wells MS. about this date Sir John Streche is a freeholder in Bicknoller " by reason of his wife," one knight's fee, together with Thomas de Raleigh (now Henry Sydenham) and John le Bret.[2] The Dean and Chapter of Wells held land both at Idson and Bicknoller. From William Strachey, mentioned above, the Stracheys of Sutton Court are descended of whom Sir Henry Strachey (1736–1810), the first Baronet and Secretary to Lord Clive, was a conspicuous member.

The old house at Blackmore still exists with its ancient mill and mill leat. It lies close to that very ancient trackway leading from Cannington Park and the Saxon Herepath there southwards in the direction of Charlinch and North Petherton. It has been in the possession of the Tynte family for a long time and Mr. St. David Kemys Tynte describes it as " of early Tudor architecture with a stone porch and chamber above. It contains a spacious dining-hall and a stone staircase and,

1. " Life of Sir Walter Raleigh," by Edward Edwards, vol. ii, p. 116.
2. Hist. MSS. Com. Wells MSS (1907).

attached to the house is a domestic chapel in a fair state of preservation. The old cross on the chapel was recently placed there by myself, being originally a Goathurst Cross."[1]

Originally there seems to have been some connection between Blackmore and Adscombe, the property of the Abbey of Athelney lying in the Quantocks at the lower end of Seven Wells Combe, a gift of Ethelred to the abbey. From the Athelney Chartulary[2] there is the following allusion to the place :

"This Indenture witnesseth that whereas there has been a great debate between the Abbot of Athelney and Richard Lyffe because the Abbot claims the holdings of the said Richard in la more Blackmore and Hull to be in the Tithing of Adscombe and to be contributory with the other tenants of the Abbot in the said Tithing to the Fifteenth Taillages and other charges,—in hope of a good agreement from this time both parties have agreed to submit themselves to the judgment of four or five gentlemen : that is to say Baldwin Malet, Walter Bluet, Richard Clevedon, Matthew Michell (Cannington), and John Vernay of Bridgwater, on such day as the said Baldwin shall assign seven days after the Feast of St. John the Baptist."

Written at Bridgwater.

What was decided does not transpire, 13 Richard II (1389). A holder of Blackmore about this date was Richard Tresseleven[3] and later on (1508) a John Tremayl.[4]

Turning from pages of Elizabethan adventure Fyne Court (so called from Fiennes ? the family name of Lord Say and Sele) the home of Andrew Crosse introduces a different and more modern range of thought. Just as Wordsworth and Coleridge, the "Lake" poets, really inaugurated at Nether Stowey and on the Quantocks a new school of poetry, so Philosopher Crosse opened a new door in science. By a coincidence Broomfield, high up on the hills is not far from the old signalling station Bagborough. "King's Hill" and

1. *See* also *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. xliii.
2. Som. Record Soc., p. 246.
3. Somerset Assize Roll.
4. Somerset Wills. Som. Record Soc., vol. xix.

"Prior's down" given by King John to the old Priory of Taunton command a goodly prospect of the valley of the Parret. Philosopher Crosse thus signalled to the world from a Broomfield eminence and was esteemed a wizard by the rustic folk, but in reality he was the "Father of Electricity."

From Broomfield hills the Wellington monument is discernible on the south; King Alfred's Tower on the east; and many another land mark, not excluding Glastonbury Tor and St. Michael's Mount, or Borough Mump. Like a cloud of witnesses memories of the ages foregather, amongst them the monument on the hill at Butleigh Wootton, a memorial to the Hood family should be noted, as it serves to recall the naval victories and sea supremacy of England.

It is part of the historical sense to visualise the past and to people familiar hills and valleys not with mere ghosts or phantoms but with men and women as they lived, as they thought and as they acted. In this way a land of "ancient renown" differs from a savage Sahara or wilderness in Africa. It lacks the "sacer vates" and the chronicle of human and especially Christian endeavour. A "cycle of Cathay" cannot vie with a single Olympiad of Europe. Egypt is redeemed by the thread of history that passes through it and through its crops of papyrus, like the classic Nile itself. Hippo has its story when we think of St. Augustine, so has Carthage. Venice sought to wed her fortunes to the everlasting waves as the "Bride of the Adriatic." For Britons whether Celt or Saxon, Norman or Dane, "Britain," to use Coleridge's phrases, is the "divine and beauteous Isle," "sole and most magnificent temple."

> "O native Britain! O my mother Isle!
> How shouldst thou prove aught else but dear and holy
> To me, who from thy lakes and mountain-hills,
> Thy clouds, thy quiet dales, thy rocks and seas
> Have drunk in all my intellectual life,
> All sweet sensations, all ennobling thoughts,
> All adoration of the God in nature,
> All lovely and all honourable things."
>
> —*Fears in Solitude.*

The Susquehanah river may have its poet some day, but could S. T. Coleridge have written thus if lured thither by

dreams of pantisocracy? There can be but one England or, as the poet calls it, Britain, at a time, and the thread of history may run from its shores westward in an ocean current carrying warmth and fertilisation. Kingdoms are left high and dry, as Crete has had its spring tides and as Egypt has had the Nile floods. There remains the modern and unseen submarine cable of Human Action—Marconigrams—and the tale of Human Endeavour with ever increasing purpose, to fathom which is a secret that lies in the womb of Time.

NOTE.—Manors at Domesday (1086) were rated according to their Hidage, and as the extent of a Hide has been a matter of dispute, it may be instructive to quote the standard measures of Glastonbury Abbey, as registered in the large MS. Cartulary at Longleat (p. 406), alluded to by Canon Jackson in his "Liber Henrici de Soliaco" (1189):

A Furlong or Ferdel . .	10 acres.
A Virgate (4 furlongs) .	40 ,,
A Hide (4 virgates) . .	160 ,,
A Knight's Fee (4 hides) .	640 ,,

The same measures obtained at Wells, when, in an account of the Cathedral Lands in the time of Bishop Roger (1244), allusion is made to the Church of Lovington with "one Hide of land, 80 acres in one field and 80 acres in another." The open field system is here indicated, (Wells MSS., Historical MSS. Commission, vol. i, p. 306, 1907). It may be noted that to-day, in Canada, a "township" is 640 acres, the old Knight's Fee—a somewhat curious coincidence.

Chapter IX.

Comwich and Comwich Passage.

HOEVER wanders by the forlorn and deserted banks of the Lower Parret and halts at Comwich Passage, either at the White House, on the east of the river, or at Comwich itself on the west, will scarcely realise that the Comwich ford or passage was once the scene of great activities. The flat marsh country below Paulet hill, on which lazy steers and oxen graze, give one the idea of a remote pasture "far from the madding crowd"; the distant spire of Bridgwater points to urban life afar off, and to localised industries, like that of brick-making. At low water the Parret waters flow sluggishly and the ever-growing load of slime and mud of a very tenacious character, clog the banks and obliterate any riparian features with a coat of yellow on which the dotterels and sand-pipers run lightly in search of food. The land is open and the horizons wide and the two little eminences of Paulet Ridge on one side and Cannington Knoll on the other guard the Passage and help to narrow the flow of the river which presently finds its exit in the waters of the Severn Sea through a puzzling and intricate maze of channels. At low water the estuary is wide and glittering, reflecting the light in marvellous fashion when the sunlight plays in flickering fashion upon the smooth ridges, which, like an opaque cloud, seem to give back as much light as they receive.

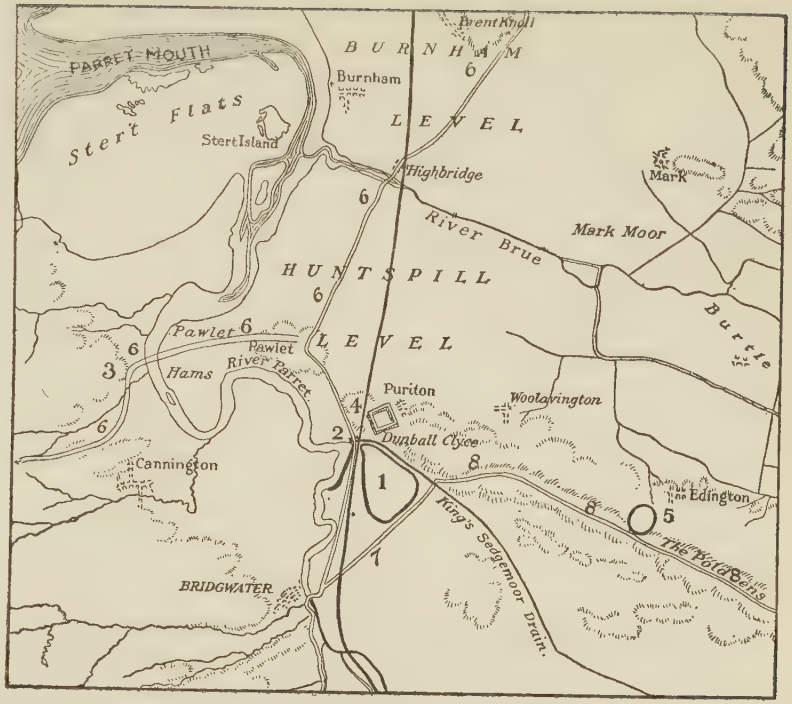
Lower down the coast amidst the débris of the blue-lias, relics of the mammoth lying amongst living star-fish and fossilised ammonites have been discovered. The Severn Sea itself, as if only half confident of its realm, retires at spring-

tides, to immense distances just here. The Gore sands shift from time to time and the small " spits " reveal a casual and unexpected existence. An amphibious region, where, nevertheless, man, at certain times, can neither creep, crawl, walk, or swim and the catastrophe of death follows the fisherman or shrimper who ventures carelessly on it in the half-lights of a winter's afternoon. The " wreccum maris " was a valuable asset to the lords of the manor hereabouts from the earliest recorded period, and if flotsam and jetsam does not come ashore nowadays it is chiefly that the deep-draught ships and steamers do not come up these shallow waters. Humphrey Blake's emigrant ship which anchored off Steart, before its Atlantic voyage, was only two hundred tons. The vessels that pass now are Severn trows and such like.

The old instructions for sailing up the mouth of the river were as follows in Speed's map (1610)—from Botestall (boatsstall or stathe): " To sail into the River Parret from the westward for the Port of Bridgwater you will first make a high round hill called Brent Knoll (500 feet), nearly over Burnham Church which you must keep due east and then sail along until you open Bridgwater Steeple. Then you are to keep the north side of Burnham Church till you open the river to the eastward of the Warren House of Steart Point." This was more than three hundred years ago and there has been some shifting of sand and mud. Indeed Steart has become an island only within recent years. In the Gough MSS. at the Bodleian, Oxford, (Somerset 7), there is a scheme under date January 1st, 1723, for making a new cut through a narrow neck of land, about three-quarters of a mile across, near Comwich, from and out of Parret river into the Severn Sea, to empty itself into Stolford (or Stoverd) Bay. Botestall Point is here mentioned. This proposition was laid before the Councillors of Bridgwater and was based, in the first instance, upon the success that had attended a previous cut in the Parret near Dunball in 1677, to which allusion has been made. Here the riparian owners gained 150 acres of the richest land in Somerset, but the cut destroyed the prosperity of Downend Pill and Puriton.

To avoid the troublesome entrance up the Parret mouth in

1. Old loop of the Parret up to 1677.
2. Viking's Pill.
3. Cynwith, Cymwich, or Cynuit Castle.
4. "Chisley Mount," or "Chefdelmunt," or "Burgh de Capite Montis," modern "Downend."
5. Edington Battlefield.
6. Saxon "Herepath" or military road from Bristol to Cymwich (or Comwich) Passage.
7. Old road to Bridgwater from Polden ridge.
8. Polden ridge road from Eggarley and Glaston, called a "Herepath" (S.A.P., vol. lxii, p. 18).



ancient days voyagers landed at Stolford or possibly, in more remote times, near Wick Farm, and from either of these landing-places, made their way by a "pilgrim's route," to Comwich, and thence pursued their journey, either up the river itself or, if they crossed Comwich Passage, by the ancient road leading to the east. It is possible that, many years ago, the Wick rocks and the ledges near the Botestall afforded greater protection than they do now. Near Watchet, at Elwell Point and Elwell Bay, the tide has made inroads, and, close by, a trust property was said by the Charity Commissioners (1819–1837) to have been reduced from twenty-one to fourteen acres. The gradual crumbling of the cliffs has always to be reckoned upon along the whole of the shore and is a marked feature.

Comwich itself, being some way up the river, was more favourably situated as a landing-site, and William of Worcester calls it "Comwich Head" (*i.e.* of navigation) for the port of Bridgwater (1400–1500). His words are: "Comwych per 3 miliaria de Brygewater est portus navium Bruggewater." In 1399 we read in the Calendar of Patent Rolls that a Richard Boyton (or Baydon) is made King's deputy in the Ports of Brugge (Bridgwater), Comwich and Dunster. Comwich, not swallowed up by Bridgwater, was important in 1392 when, according to John of Glastonbury, a great lawsuit between the king and the abbot about the possession of the port of Axwater was argued out and decided there, the jury consisting of captains and sailors with local knowledge. There must have been a Court at Comwich. In 1227 (Close Rolls) the Abbot of Glaston claimed exclusive jurisdiction over all pleas, both of the Crown and others about the xii Hides (*de xii Hidis infra insulam de Avalon*) with their fines. The jurisdiction of the Church was held to be supreme and the case at Comwich was decided in its favour, Axwater being finally adjudged to the Abbey, "jure fundationis."

To begin with, it is probable that Glaston looked upon all the littoral and riverine districts here as her peculiar right. According to John of Glaston (p. 347) the abbey claimed wreck of sea below Berrow and the Hundred of Brent, a privilege which may have dated from the original grant of Brent,

attributed by some to the great Rex Arturus himself[1] together with the Polden ridge, a gift confirmed by King Ina, the Severn (Sabrina) being named as the northern limit. If Glaston was supreme on the Axe and its landing-places she ruled the waters of the Brue linked to the abbey by the Pill Row Cut, across Mark Moor. At Domesday we learn that Peritone or Puriton and its church were given to the Church of St. Peter at Rome and to the " Episcopus " there, (as the Pope is called), probably to be used as a kind of hostelry for pilgrims journeying along a Via Sacra to and from Glaston.

Glaston supreme at Berrow might have claimed wreckage at Burnham as this place lay between Brent and Sabrina, according to the wide terms of the original gift, but we find Burnham as Royal " dominicum " in King Alfred's will. This change may be explained in this way that, when Glaston was utterly destroyed by the Danes in 878 (*penitus vastata*) the Glaston possessions all reverted to King Alfred who, in this case, kept Burnham as a Saxon king's heritage. Tradition has it that the Danes were defeated at Brent and fled to Brean Down where they were blockaded by the victors until they were taken off in ships.[2] But the moral was that the strategic places and landings should be in Royal hands. In the " Placita de quo " a John Tregoz was asked why he claimed waif and stray and wreckage in Burnham and the king's advocate, William de Giselham, proved that, as Henry II, Richard, and John had always taken it, the claim of Tregoz could not be upheld. At a later date St. Andrew's Pill, near the church at Burnham, is claimed as one of the " pills " coming under Bridgwater Port, which had a jurisdiction stretching from Bridgwater to How cliff or How rocks at Brean Down. This jurisdiction was probably the sequel of the shipping monopoly which accrued to William Brewer's Castle at Bridgwater *temp.* Richard I and King John.

In a Charter of Henry VII confirming a previous charter of Edward IV the Liberties and Franchises of Bridgwater are thus defined :

1. *Collinson*, vol. ii, p. 242.
2. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. xii, p. 66.

By land. "On the east part of the said town to a certain cross called Kelyng Cross and from thence to a certain field called Matthew's Field on the west part. And from thence to a certain place called Crowpille on the north part of that town and from thence to the said cross called Kelyng Cross. And by water from the bridge called Lymebrigge to Hewclyve (How Rocks). Thence (up the river) to Breandown together with the Rode called St. Andrew's pole (or pill)—to Highbrigge—the Hed of Comwiche, wiynpenyes dokke, mill pill, prioras pille (belonging to the Prioress of Cannington ?), harful pille, Sax pole, Paulet pille, Downend pille, pegens pille and crow pill with all other pools, creeks and places in the same water for ships and other vessels to lye and rest there."

There was, therefore, more than one claimant to jurisdiction over the "pills" of the Lower Parret: Glaston to begin with and then the occupants of Bridgwater Castle. The claims of Comwich as the port and pill of an ancient passage dating far back in the history of Dumnonia are exceptional. As Nature had provided a drift or ford, the title is immemorial, the date of both road and pill being præ-Roman. The tolls of the passage must have been a king's or prince's asset—whether Dumnonian or Saxon.

Comwich, by derivation, possibly, a "king's wick," was always a part of the Royal Hundred of Cannington (or Cantuctune), where the Quantock stream empties itself in the Parret. Adjacent manors are said to be "near Comwich," as a well-known place. In 9 Henry IV William Bonville held Gurneys in Cannington, "juxta Comwich": also Edstock and Bere, "juxta Comwich." Later on, in 12 Henry VI, according to an inquisition, Elizabeth Trivet held Otterhampton and Comwich, with Cock and Clayhill, two well-known places in Stoke-Courcy, "as of the Manor of Wyke," which would seem to show that the ferry and the passagium of Comwich were placed under the Barons of Stoke Courcy Castle, as of importance.

Ecclesiastically, Comwich became part of the endowments of Cannington Priory, a nunnery founded, so tradition has it, by Robert de Courcy (1100–1200). It was linked also with

Pederham, which had a chapel dedicated to St. James, a chapel at Comwich being dedicated to St. Leonard. In 1412 the land and tithes of Pederham were worth four marcs per annum, those of Comwich ten marcs. Pederham Manor, lying between Comwich and Bere, was always liable to inundations (Hugo's "Nunneries"). To-day Comwich, joined with Otterhampton has a new church built in 1870 and dedicated to St. Peter.

In modern maps "Combwitch" is often spelt thus, but this is a deceptive form as there is no vestige of a combe (cwm) in this flat country. Fortunately, there are older forms of this place-name extant. In the Pipe Rolls of Henry II (1178) it is spelt Comwys and Cunyz; in the Placita of 27 Henry III, Comys; in 9 Edward Comwyz or Cumwyz[1]; in the Placita of Edward III Cunyz or Comwyz. In Sir J. Rees's "Cambro-British Saints" there is a mention of a Court of Cynuit with the village of Cynuit, under the Life of St. Cadoc. (*See* Preface).

A recent visit to Comwich (Sept. 15th, 1922) in company with Colonel E. St. C. Pemberton, confirms the writer's theory that here was the famous "Cynuit Castle": here the scene of Ubba's defeat by "Odda dux Dumnoniorum." The site of the battle-field on the east side of the old British fort, facing the river passage, is exactly where we should expect it to have been and at the weak point indicated by Asser. Judging from the remains of skeletons it was no mere skirmish but a regular set battle involving the death of hundreds. The Danes are said to have lost 840 (or 1200). A quarryman, who was busy at his usual work and an old native of the place, with an experience dating back nearly seventy years, said that discoveries of skeletons had, within his knowledge, been made for more than sixty years. When a child he had unearthed a ghastly skull himself. Just here the soil lies in a very thin stratum upon the mass of carboniferous limestone, as a casual inspection of the face of the quarry will show. Mr. Berry who works this quarry gives it as his opinion that hundreds of skeletons have been unearthed. From the battle-field itself it is easy to reconstruct the main features of this momentous meeting. Below and a short distance off was the ford, easily

1. Wells MSS. Historical MSS. Commission, vols. i and ii.

crossed at low water, but not so easily negotiated when the tidal wave was due.[1] Part of the Danish force may have been engaged on the work of blockade, the rest of them may have been at "Vikings Pill," just a short distance up the Parret, but on the opposite side. The besieged force under Odda knew the tides and made their notable early morning sally at the exact moment which suited them best, according to the state of the tidal river and the "Bore." The Danes on the east side could not help those on the west at short notice, a fact which must be clear to all who have watched at March tides the advent of the "Bore" at Comwich Passage. Asser says that a few Danes escaped in their ships, and this must have been when the "Bore" came up and filled the river bed. This, of course, was quite possible. But, in the interval, the triumph of "Odda Duke of Devon" was complete. The ground was cleared for King Alfred, who does not appear to have fought at Comwich Castle, and time given him to adequately prepare his base at Athelney. His plans here may have waited upon the success of Odda and the Devon men. His base was safe from attack on the Quantock side after this crushing blow at Comwich, the capture of the Raven flag and the death of Ubba. Without this victory his rear may have been menaced and his refuge insecure. Then Alfred prepared for the great coup at Pentecost, seven weeks afterwards.

As the historic "Aust Passage," on the Severn river, has always been in the past a most important point on the Roman route from Bath to Caerleon, passing to the mouth of the Wye, so Comwich Passage on the Parret has always marked a spot of both sea and land communication, linking the country east and west of the Parret together. Here is a "hard," as it is locally called, or a smooth layer of Blue Lias stones, across which, at low water, it has been possible for horsemen and wheeled traffic to pass. Such a ford would be called in South African parlance "a drift." The inhabitants of Comwich and neighbourhood call the passage a "Cassy," *i.e.* a Causeway, but whether the expression applies to the drift in the river itself or to the concrete road on either side of it is un-

1. *See* Greswell's "Battle of Edington," 1910.

certain. The ford has long been disused, but an old ferry-man told the writer that within his memory, dating back to the early part of the nineteenth century, waggons were occasionally driven across.

Within recent times large ferry boats conveyed cattle, sheep and passengers across and the traffic from Bristol to the West went largely by this route. An old inhabitant, aged 92, and alive in 1921,[1] born on the Quantocks, remembered the picturesque incident of a run of a stag from the combes of the Quantocks to the Parret which it crossed. As it happened to be low water, the huntsmen and some of the field rode across Comwich Passage and, after killing the deer, betook themselves to the well-known "Shoulder of Mutton" Inn at the junction of the roads near Paulet Church. But they could not return as easily as they came. This happened more than seventy years ago. He also supplemented this picturesque detail by remarking that Comwich Cassy was used by Irish labourers who, coming over from Ireland, sought work as hop-pickers in the East of England. If so, they must have continued to follow an extremely ancient route that would apparently have taken them from the Parret and along the Polden ridge and so across Salisbury Plain.

Under a recent date Mr. Robert Guy Everard, a member of a family resident here for many generations, writes thus: "The Combwich ford was well known and used considerably in former days. It was the chief route to Glastonbury and Salisbury. At low tide horses and cattle were safely driven across the river. Some thirty years ago I hunted the Brent country with my harriers and frequently rode my horse across at low tide, the bottom being hard sand." Mr. Everard's father, the respected owner of Hill House, overlooking the river, is in his ninety-second year (1922), being lord of the manor and principal landowner of Otterhampton of which parish Comwich now forms part. The ford and passage were of course well known to him. In old days the Parret slime and mud, now blocking access to the ford and such an obstacle, was cleared away frequently. The stone steps still exist.

1. Mr. Woolley, living at Burnham.

"Comwich Passage" was certainly used by the Rev. Richard Warner in one of his "Walks" from Bath (1901)—and he has mentioned it as well as the historic "Shoulder of Mutton" Inn at Paulet and "The White House," where the passage exists. On the east side of the Parret the old Here-path, of a width of sixty feet, can be most clearly seen going towards Brent Knoll and forming a parish boundary. In 1327 a ferryman (*passour*) plied his occupation here[1]: also, there were sea-walls here as "Walter by the Wall" would show by his tenancy. Just here the river provides a very interesting natural study, especially when the tidal "Bore" or "Eager" sweeps up the channel from the estuary just below. The "Bore" is seen at its highest at spring tides in March (the month in which the Battle of Cynuit Castle was fought at Easter, March 23rd) or in September, at the time of the Equinox. If Equinoctial gales from the south or south-west prevail and blow strongly, the water outside is piled up in the channel and rushes with accumulated force up the Parret. The speed attained by the tidal current is four or five miles per hour and its force reaches (or did reach) Lang-port at a distance of twenty-five miles from the mouth. Viewed from Comwich the spectacle of the advancing "Bore" strikes the observer as curious and impressive. Far down the river a low crested wave forms, making a white line in mid-channel, and it gradually forges up sweeping back the thin and feeble current of fresh water as if of no account what-ever. There is a subdued roar and rustle in the air. Pre-sently, as it comes nearer, the might and volume of the tidal wave appears in a majestic and irresistible aftermath, as sandy spits and muddy borders are lapped up. The crest is just the "avant courier" like a small bugleman heralding greater forces and the deeper current waxes stronger and stronger as the bed of the river fills up. Where the banks narrow the surging wave is swifter and more insistent, especially nearer Bridgwater. Just here it is said that Oliver Cromwell, when making a survey of the fortifications of Bridgwater Castle in a small boat, was nearly swamped. If the swamping had been

1. Exchequer Lay Subsidies.

complete and the great Cromwell had been drowned in the Parret, surely this " Bore " would have always figured in our annals as a great historic flood. At Bridgwater Quay all boats and vessels are ready for the " Bore " and swing accordingly. We are certainly in the presence of strong elemental forces. The late Mr. William Lunn of Bridgwater once gave it as his opinion (and he was an expert in these matters) that the range of the tides in this part of the Bristol Channel was sixty feet at places, between highest and lowest water, whilst that of spring-tides at Liverpool was about twenty-six feet and at Yarmouth Roads only six feet. Writing on the occasion of unusual floods on 16th February, 1903, Mr. Lunn said " The zero of the gauge at Bridgwater Bridge is 5.62 feet above Ordnance datum, and a twenty feet tide at the Bridge would therefore be 25.62 above Ordnance datum and consequently 15.62 feet above those lands which are only ten feet above Ordnance datum. There are large areas of land to the N.N.E. and E.S.E. of the Petherton Levels which would be always flooded were they not protected by artificial sea-walls, banks and sluices." From this scientific and exact statement of present conditions we may infer what the state of the levels must have been in 800–900 when King Alfred took refuge on the North Petherton Levels. This was long before the days of the " Commissioners of Sewers " and the canalisation of the River Cary.

Writing again with reference to an unusual flood and tidal wave of September, 1903, Mr. Lunn remarked : " I was informed that the tide on the night of September 10th last rose to 20 feet 4 inches on the gauge at Bridgwater Bridge instead of the predicted height of 15 feet 4 inches and I believe such was the case. I was also told that it was six feet above its predicted height at Burnham and Highbridge. I was also informed that the tide ebbed and flowed four times at Bridgwater and two or three times at Highbridge. My informant as to the tide at Highbridge says that at the first ebb the water sank six feet and then flowed up higher than before. The flooding was not caused below Comwich, at any rate, by the might of the tide, but by the waves which at times ran for long distances in a solid body, one or two feet deep over

the banks and walls. The high tide was caused by the wind which at first blew from the S.W. and heaped up the sea at the entrance of St. George's Channel, and then at time of high water veered round to N.W. and in so doing, drove the water up the Bristol Channel."

From the above description, with details of the rise and fall of the tidal "Bore," varying so much according to weather circumstances, it may be concluded how perilous and uncertain the Comwich Passage may have been. Just here the strength both of inland floods and tidal wave can best be studied as the river itself is narrowed in its course. In times of inland floods in winter or spring, or, more especially, when a thaw of snow coincides with heavy rains, the volume of fresh water is great. The total watershed of the River Parret, according to calculations and figures stated in a Parliamentary Report by Richard Grantham, F.R.S. (1872–3) is 362,860 acres, of which the Upper Parret, with the Ile and Yeo (whence Ilminster and Yeovil take their names) comprises about 186,880 acres; the Lower Parret, with the Tone, about 175,980 acres. The area liable to floods in the Upper Parret Valley is 20,000—30,000 acres; in the Lower Parret Valley a vast and indeterminate area, varying with the circumstances of wind, weather and rainfall.

The River Cary, now canalised along the King's Sedgemoor Drain and entering the Parret near Dunball, used to join the Parret at Borough Bridge, where the Tone waters come in, and in former days must have added to the flooded state of the whole region, during King Alfred's reign and for many centuries afterwards. The watershed of the Cary Valley and region adjoining was calculated by Mr. Grantham to be 44,930 acres, of which the flood area in 1872–3 was 13,958 acres in extent. All the Cary Valley water mixing with the Lower Parret at Dunball Clyce, flows by Comwich Passage, the best point for testing the whole volume.

The River Brue or Brew, on the east side of the Polden Ridge, has a watershed of 136,850 acres, with a flooded area of 13,576 in 1872–3. This of course represents the region more particularly in the vicinity of Glaston, and Brew Waters find their way into Bridgwater Bay below Comwich Passage,

near Burnham. The Valley of the Brue, with its ancient floods and overflowings, is more interesting for the light it throws upon the nature of the country around Glaston and the "Insula Avalonia" as it existed formerly. Up to comparatively recent times the village of Meare or Mere, where the celebrated Glastonbury Lake Village has been discovered, was, as the name implies, a marsh region with its three islands of Ferramere, Godney and Westeie.[1] In Strachey's "Religious Houses of Somerset," Spraulesmede or Burtle, near the present Edington Station, is described as being "in the very sink of the marsh, for though there is a stone ford called Burtle Steening over the river by it in the summer, 'tis not possible nor the place accessible in any way without a boat in winter."

In the summer of 1917 the whole country round Shapwick, Meare and neighbourhood was visited with a tremendous and unusual rainfall, which brought floods into these levels and carried away hay from the fields and submerged the potato plots. At Bruton, within twenty-four hours, a rainfall of 9.6 inches was registered, a fact duly noted in the current journal of the Royal Geographical Society. On this occasion the Brue is said to have burst its banks.[2]

To return to the River Parret and the Comwich Passage, it can be easily understood how enormous, sometimes, the volume of flood water must be when circumstances combine to aggravate the situation. It is probably true that in modern times, when the tide ebbs, a greater volume of water sweeps through Comwich Passage and scours the river channel than formerly, a state of things attributable to increased surface drainage of interior valleys, and to the existence of rhines and walls, confining and clearing the surplus water off. But a thousand years ago, when the hand of the engineer had done little, the whole valley both of the Upper and Lower Parret (that is to say above and below Langport) must have been a waste of stagnant water barely freeing itself even at spring tides, a paradise for wild fowl. Looking from the Mendips westwards over the flooded valleys of the Axe, Brue, Parret,

1. *Collinson*, vol. ii, p. 272.

2. *See* also *Royal Geographical Journal* for July, 1922, p. 86.

Yeo, Ile and Tone, the region was impermeable and inaccessible, except for the fowler and fisherman. No forces could deploy across, at, or from it except by such ridges as the Poldens. These physical conditions throw light upon King Alfred's refuge and his campaign in 878.

Bishop Clifford, whose researches into Somerset archæology are well known in the *Proceedings* of the Somerset Archæological Society, and a connection of the late Lord Clifford of Chudleigh, lord of the Manor of Cannington, has advanced a theory about the Roman " Iter " from Exeter to Caerleon. In this Roman " Iter " there were three stages, (1) from Exeter to Leucarus, *i.e.* Hembury Fort in Devon, fifteen miles ; (2) from Leucarus to Nidus, *i.e.* Norton Fitz-Warren near Taunton, fifteen miles ; (3) from Nidus to Bomium, which must be somewhere near Comwich and the mouth of the Parret. Thence to Caerleon, twenty-eight miles by sea. In this sketch Bishop Clifford may be perfectly right in assuming a Roman " Iter " across Somerset from Exeter to the Parret mouth, but the road may have been by way of Willscombe and the Brendons and so to Triscombe on the Quantocks by the Saxon Herepath which existed in former times and the course of which we shall trace. From Comwich and the Parret mouth, however, the route may have followed the Saxon Herepath to Bristol and so to Aust Passage, a land-route chiefly. Comwich Passage, as well as Aust Passage would both come within the march. Apparently there is some valid reason for modifying Bishop Clifford's theory in this way.

On the question of the relative importance of Comwich Port and Passage it is necessary to consider it in reference not only to Cannington and the west side of the river but also such a village as Hunspille. This parish was originally more rich than Bridgwater, at any rate, and was inhabited by warlike and adventurous families, as the very sub-division of Hunspille-Cogan ; Hunspille-Marys or de Marisco ; Hunspille-de-la-Hay, and Hunspille-Verney, indicate. The Cogans went with the de Courcy family of Stoke-Courcy, just across the Parret, to conquer Ulster in the twelfth century, with many scions of le Poer or Power and Butler families near the Parret, whose " incunabula " seems to have been in these parts before

they adventured with the de Courcy champions to Ireland. The Verneys were of Fairfield, Stoke-Courcy, where their tombs are still to be seen, and with them, not far off, may be coupled the progenitors of the Russell family at Bernersworth or Barnsworthy. The de Marisco family appear also to have gone from Hunspille and the Parret, as a Herbert de Marisco was summoned, with divers Irish barons, to attend Edward II on an expedition against the Scots. From this de Marisco family, Hunspille-Mareys descended to the Earls of Ormond.[1] A notorious member of this family was William de Marisco, son of Geoffrey de Marisco, Chief Justice of Ireland in the reign of Henry III. This William must have inherited a spice of Irish lawlessness and, according to Matthew Paris, he set up a stronghold (1242) on Lundy Island "more piratico," levying mail on friend and foe. But what could we expect, when his father Geoffrey, in spite of his position as Chief Justice of Ireland, conspired against the King of England and tried to murder him at Woodstock (*jugulare apud Woodstock*). William of Marisco raided the coasts of the Severn Sea from Bideford to Porth Kerry and Aberthaw, and his name became a terror to all plying their lawful occupation, until caught and then "hanged, drawn and quartered" by a levy of men hastily recruited from Devon and Glamorgan. Ireland, that land described so well in the "Story of Nations" series by Lady Emily Lawless, seems always to have been a favoured region of the ex-lex man. Even the sons of Harold, when driven from England to Ireland, swooped down upon Severn waters and plundered friend and foe alike. It is a curious coincidence that a man named Cogan was recently (1921) found in a conspiracy against England, "Hibernior Hibernis," bearing the name and perhaps a remote descendant of the original Cogan family of Hunspille-Cogan. A scrutiny of Dublin settlers will also reveal the fact that many of them, such as Johannes de Tanton, Johannes de Cantok (Quantock), Nicol de Canteton (Cannington), Roger de Comwich[2] went from North Somerset and probably started from the Parret

1. Collinson, "History of Somerset," vol ii, p. 389.
2. Archives of the City of Dublin, 1172—1320, edited by J. T. Gilbert.

and Comwich Passage. Nor, indeed, were men of Bristowe origin backward in their Irish adventures. This kind of oversea colonisation in ancient times proves surely that the Sinn Fein traditions and Sinn Fein patriotism, relying as it pretends to rely, upon exclusive Irish nationality and the doings of learned Irish Saints in the first ages of missionary Christianity, rest upon rather rickety and unsubstantial foundations. The spirit of the Danish pirates and of the Danish law may have survived and impregnated this ideal nationality. In the making of our Ireland history the tide of the Parret conveying ships and adventurers from the shores of West Somerset both to South Wales and to Ireland, may have exercised a greater and more subtle influence than most students of our annals imagine. The great Sir John Perrot (1527–1592), Lord Deputy of Ireland and President of Munster in Tudor days, surely took the name of the Parret itself to Ireland. Thomas Cantok, Bishop of Emly and Chancellor of Ireland certainly took the name of Quantock to that country.

The following notices of historic floods in the Valley of the Parret may be of interest. As far back as A.D. 430 we read in the Iolo MSS. that floods devastated lands in Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, Glamorgan, Gower, Dyfed, *i.e.* Pembroke. These floods must have been of a great and catastrophic character and possibly overwhelmed Kenefig in South Wales. In January, 1607, there were great floods in the Brue and Parret Valleys, quaintly described in an old pamphlet called "God's Warning to his people of England."[1] The banks broke at Burnham and some thirty villages were utterly overflowed. Suddenly, it was said, and without warning, the country for twenty miles by five was flooded to the depth of ten or twelve feet, the deeper part being at Kingston-Seymour. At Hunspille twenty-eight people were drowned, the village being quite overwhelmed, as was also a large portion of Berrow, Mark, Lympsham, South and East Brent. Brean was swallowed up, for of nine houses seven were destroyed and, with them, twenty-six persons lost their lives. It was the same with Alston-Mareis, with Yatton and the hamlet of

1. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. xxiv, pt. 11, p. 63.

Puxton. Besides these, Worle, Kewstoke, Banwell, Wyke (St. Lawrence), Clevedon, Portishead, Portbury and Weston-super-Mare also suffered. In the quaint language of the pamphlet, Ken was almost "out of kenning." In this parish stood a fairly large building belonging to Lady Straunge into which all were invited to shelter. The horses stood in the hall above their middle in water. In Berrow, a maid coming from milking was round about beset and climbing up a bank, remained there twenty-four hours; the rats, mice and wants (moles) being in swarms about her to save their lives. All this, adds the old chronicler of these disasters, brought profit to some, as sea-faring men came in boats and went away richly laden. Others called "sheep byters" killed the sheep for their tallow, only leaving the carcases. Conies sought safety on the backs of the sheep but were at last drowned with them. As soon as possible five hundred men at twelvepence a day were put to work at Burnham, the Justices helping not only with their eyes but also with their hands.[1]

In the nineteenth century there were those floods of 1872–3, the subject of Mr. Grantham's Report. About this date it was not an unusual thing to see that portion of the G.W. Railway, running through Durston, flooded so deep that the water reached the axles of the carriages. In 1882 there were floods at Langport: again in 1891 and 1894; an account of the latter appearing in the *Somerset County Gazette* of December 15th, 1894. In 1903 Langport was again flooded and in December, 1907, whole areas of the Petherton Levels presented the appearance of a vast lake as viewed from Kingshill in Broomfield parish on the Quantocks.

Minor floodings and swampings in the Parret Valley have been frequent at all times. In 1314 there was an appropriation to the Master and Brethren of the House of St. Mark, Bristol, of the Church of Stockland Gaunts, the said house being in debt in consequence of an inundation of the sea submerging a considerable portion of their lands. The brethren needed help as they were bound, besides other alms, to feed one hundred poor. In 1694 there was a Parret lawsuit about

1. *See* also *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., xxix, pt. 2, p. 53.

" Yeats tenements," three of them with sixteen acres each, held of Sir Kingsmill Lucy, Lord of the Manor of Cannington. A witness in this case[1] deposed that about six or seven years ago the said grounds were overflowed by salt water and much " dampnified " thereby.

There is one peculiarity about the Parret and this is the formation of sandy spits and islands along its course. In the thirty-eighth year of Queen Elizabeth the Crown laid claim to an island called " Burlands Ooze," in Stoke Courcy parish, its area being fifty acres. It was probably called " Burlands " after a Stoke Courcy family of that name who lived at Steynings Manor. But although the Crown was successful in establishing its right[2] it does not appear that the island itself was very valuable as a permanent possession. The present Steart or Start Island has been a varying quantity in modern times, being regarded as a " No man's Land " off Burnham, where Excise officers had no jurisdiction and where untaxed spirits and beer might be drunk by thirsty mariners disembarking from ships close by. The " good time," however, has evidently gone by, and scattered bricks and debris, worn by wind and weather, alone remain as evidence of " mine host's parlour." In early Tudor days (1550–1560) a rough sketch map shows that the Parret flowed out to Stolford and " Botestall " and so to the Severn Sea in a more direct line than at present. The Parret mouth, as already noted, was in Tudor days guarded by cannon. " Comwich Passage " in this case was much nearer the channel.[3]

In Emanuel Bowen's map (1720) Dunbal Island and Slab Island are both on the east side of the Parret and near Hunspille. The river has been no respecter of parishes or parish boundaries as it is calculated that no less than 150 acres of land has accrued to Paulet parish, and to the Abbey lands of St. Augustine's, Bristol, by the shifting of its course westward.[4] Just about Dunball and Downend there was a

1. Exchequer Depositions.

2. Exchequer Depositions.

3. *See* Article on " Ancient Bridgwater " by the Rev. W. Greswell, *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. lxvi.

4. *Paulet Parish Magazine.*

Domesday " Manor of Ila," mentioned in Domesday as lying between two arms of the Parret (*inter duas aquas*), to be explained by the loop of the river originally existing here.

To the geologist and student of tidal phenomena, Comwich Passage, lying between the mouth of the River Parret and its interior wanderings, presents some interesting and old-world features. Nothing seems stable. Out yonder, where broad expanses of muddy estuary meet the eye, across which the fisherman and shrimper wends his perilous way on primitive " mudhorse," banks of sand accumulate only to be swept away. The " Chesil " or beach of rounded stones, worn with the action of the tide, shifts from place to place where the sea poppy grows. The sand-pipers and oyster-catchers have to shift their nesting places from year to year. In the very distant past great trees grew here in the labyrinths of a primæval forest and their prostrate trunks have survived to tell the tale. Inland this forest stretched far up the Petherton Levels. Here is a letter written by Councillor Harrison, of Bridgwater (1744–5), to the Royal Society about discoveries in North Petherton itself. During two dry summers some large trees were exhumed from the marshes, which the country folk thought were yews but on working them up, they were found to be cedars. The trunks were taken up with roots and boughs upon them, evidently growing on or near the place itself, *i.e.* " a sandy hurst of about 200 acres."[1] In a similar way prostrate oak trees have been found in the peat near Middlezoy. Also at Athelney and Borough Bridge, King Alfred's retreat, signs of a forest have been found at the depth of eighteen feet. On Mark Moor a similar phenomenon has been noticed,[2] where both oak and yew trees have been dug up four to six feet below the surface. After being exposed to the air for a little, the wood becomes rotten and crumbles into dust. As long as they are covered by the peat, the peat itself seems to preserve the wood, a peculiarity noticed in the well-known excavations at Glaston Lake Village at Mere. Prof. W. Boyd Dawkins has attributed the fall and destruction

1. Gough MSS., Somerset, Bodleian.
2. Collinson, " History of Somerset," vol. i, p. 182.

of these big trees to the silting up of the rivers by which their beds were raised and the surrounding places became flooded. Then the peat grew and killed the trees, their roots becoming weak and rotten. Storms of wind completed the disaster.[1] On the Welsh Coast and in far-off Pembroke the same story of growth and destruction was rehearsed. In former days these boggy places were called " karres," a word that survives in Karremore or Carmore Mead at Carhampton to this day.

At Cranebridge the alluvial deposit is from eight to ten feet deep over the peat : at Borough Bridge there is a fourteen feet bed of peat resting on marl.[2] Under these circumstances it is not easy to disinter ancient remains, the peat growing from year to year, but at Cross in Brent Marsh the remains of a supposed Roman road have been found lying six feet beneath the surface.

At the close of the Pleistocene period, the present distribution of sea, land and river must have been left much as it is now in its main features. But the whole area, being flat and much on the same level, was always subject to random and unaccountable fluviatile and estuarine conditions, as the silt or débris was moved hither and thither by wind and flood. In this particular region, where there are few slopes or declivities, but only " tumps " and mounds occasionally forming small " eyots " or islands, Nature has not been a quick-change artist. But the process of silting up of sand and mud accumulation is always going on. The Parret estuary shifts hither and thither but it always grows. In course of time mud flats may become reclaimed marsh ground. In other parts of the world great harbours indeed have been wiped out by the action of interior denudation. Where now is the harbour of Ostia ? Or that of Ephesus ? The Parret is not the only Maeander. Nature is always acting according to her inevitable laws and the history of mortals is bound to follow her workings.

By a strange turn of events the modern engineer has sought to turn the low levels of the Valley of the Parret to advantage by partly canalising the river. In 1824–5 the project of a

1. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol xviii, pt. 1, p. 26.
2. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. xxvi, p. 114.

Ship Canal from Beer on the south coast of Dorset to Stolford on the Severn Sea was seriously entertained and an Act of Parliament passed to sanction it, the celebrated Telford being appointed as the engineer. In the enthusiasm evoked by the project it was foretold that Taunton would become a second Liverpool.[1] The cost of this great work was then estimated to be £1,712,844, a comparatively small sum as millions are counted nowadays and the particulars are given by Mr. Pulman. This would, indeed, have been a strange and unexpected turn in the history of the old Saxon "Botestall" at Stolford, with its ancient chapel of St. Michael. When the number of light-draught vessels entering the Parret in 1867 was three thousand annually, according to John Draper's "Somerset" (p. 129), there might have been something in the scheme which cut the isthmus and made the rounding of the Cornish coast unnecessary, and even now something might be said for it. Still, the tidal flow of the Parret may be utilised in another way and power-stations be erected near Bridgwater to drive machinery. The ebb and flow of the Parret makes a tremendous force all going to waste.

1. *See* Jeboult's "History of West Somerset," and Pulman's "The Book of the Axe," pp. 81-82.

Chapter X.

A Saxon Herepath.

IT is from a military and strategic point of view that Cynwith ford and passage give their chief interest, especially to the student of our ancient annals, under the Anglo-Saxon Kings. Most people have been under the impression that the Brug or Bridge of Walter de Douai (Bridgewater) was the first and greatest passage over the Parret. This is not the case. The Cynwith ford and passage bisects the most ancient military road in the West running from Bristol to Exmoor and so to Barnstaple and North Devon. If once an invader held permanent command here he could follow this "Herepath" or military road over the ridges of the Quantocks and threaten the Vale of Taunton: or, he could follow it to Brendon and so threaten Watchet, Minehead, and Porlock. In fact his control would be over all sea approaches and also land attacks. No wonder Cynwith was a disputed point and battles were continually fought at the Parret mouth. "Cynwith Castle" to the west of the ford and passage is also a notable feature to this day and the term "Castle" is still found on the Cannington Tithe Map. (*See* Preface for Dr. Clifford's theory).

In the Danish campaign of 878 many writers have placed Cynwith Castle near Bideford; also, they have supposed that the Danes launched their attack upon Alfred's base at Athelney from Demetia, narrowing this geographical term to Pembroke and Milford Haven. This extraordinary view of the course of military events has only to be stated to show its irrelevancy and absurdity. Granted that the Danes landed near Westward Ho! of what use would this have been with fifty miles

of forest and rough country between them and Athelney. Nor were there monastic "spolia opima" to be won here resembling the prizes around Glaston and in the Valley of the Parret, a tidal river, which took them up to the very heart of Somerset. Some, again, have thought that the Danes might have landed at Countisbury where Devon and Somerset meet. But there was never a landing-place here and the strategy here would have been futile. The writer has passed these

Bridgwater and the Mouth of the Parret

From a Cottonian MS. temp. Hen. VIII.

theories in review in a work on "The Battle of Edington" (The Wessex Press, Taunton) and it is hardly necessary to repeat the arguments. The geographical and strategic difficulties disappear if under "Demetica regio" we include Glamorgan and possibly Monmouth, and under Dumnonia we include West Somerset as far east as the Parret.

Let us turn to a description of the Saxon Herepath which will throw much more light upon the whole strategy both of Danes and of King Alfred. Beginning with Bristol it may be noted that Collinson noted more than 130 years ago that a Saxon Herepath or military road entered the Hundred of

Hareclive,[1] adding that in the vicinity there was a road called "Hare lane." Not far off was the wansdike, leading from Wiltshire to a Severn port, a subject duly investigated by that able antiquary Sir Richard C. Hoare ("Roman Roads," by T. Codrington). But the Harepath goes westward at right angles to the Wansdike leaving it near Dundry and Maes Knoll, about five miles south of Bristol.

At Wrington, ten miles south-west of Bristol, the late Prebendary Scarth identified a fragment of a Roman road on his glebe, forming a section of the old Bristol-Bridgwater line of communication.[2] This he prized greatly as a genuine relic and Mr. Scarth was a good judge of Roman antiquities. In company with the late Mr. J. H. Parker, C.B., the great investigator of Roman roads and Roman buildings at Rome itself, he advanced a theory of Roman communications in the neighbourhood of Taunton and Bridgwater (1872). At Great Wimberham signs of Roman occupation have been discovered in the shape of a villa with tesselated pavements close to the river Yeo.[3] The use of the Latin "portus" (Welsh Porth), as in Portbury and Portishead, may show Severn ports in Roman times. When King Alfred gave Banwell and Congresbury, close to the Yeo, to Bishop Asser, it is possible that the Bishop himself may have used a very ancient passage from Porth Ceri.

The Herepath approaches the Mendips and passes close under Dolebury Camp, through a narrow gorge. The opportunities for inland defence here are obvious even supposing an enemy had been able to dominate the Cadbury forts—also, it crosses the head waters of the Yeo. Thence to Axbridge and Overweare, a place of importance on the upper Axe and formerly a landing-place and dignified as a Borough, sending M.P.'s to London.

From Overweare the Herepath skirts the south and west of Brent Knoll, that most commanding position visible far down channel. Brent Knoll was called a "Castellarium" up to

1. Collinson, "History of Somerset," vol. ii, p. 279
2. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. xviii, p. 55.
3. *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vols. xxvii and xxxi.

the twelfth century as we gather from Glastonbury records. When the Herepath, passing along Huntspill, reaches Paulet Church a branch road on the left goes to the Polden ridge and to Downend where on Saxton's map (1579) appears a place called "Chiese Chettle of ye Mount," a phrase not readily explained; also called "Chisley Mount."[1] A place-name Chisletts still exists, a marsh of thirty acres, close by. Elsewhere the place is called the "Burgh de Capite Montis," probably a Saxon Burgh to begin with. In the Pipe Rolls it is recorded that the Columbers family of Nether Stowey had a "Burghriht" there. Field names still preserve the existence of a "Burgh" and "Bally Field" recalls the idea of a "Ballium." An extract from a "Complete History of Somerset," Sherborne, 1742, is as follows:

"Chidley Mount. The Lordship of William de Brewiere given him by King John, but afterwards of William de Montacute the son of Dru (Drogo). Some Roman coins have been found in that town, which is an argument not only of its antiquity, but of the truth of the common saying that it was once a large Town and out of it sprang the Town of Bridgwater which stands opposite to it on the other side of the Parish."

In the Placita de Quo of Edward I, John de Columbers has free warren in Woolavington, assize of bread in Burgo de Nether Stowey; in Puriton, Pillory and Tumbrel in hamlet of Chedesmunt, called also Chefdelmunt elsewhere. The place-names "Burrow" or "Borough Mead," "Castle Land," Outer and Inner Island still survive, also "Salt-wharf" and "Horsey," *i.e.* Horse Island.

The question is, was this the fort below Edington, on the Polden ridge above, at which Guthrum was besieged and where he finally surrendered to King Alfred. It certainly fits in with events as described. "Horsey" or the horse island might have been the place where the Danes at Vikings Pill, close by, might have tethered and fed their horses for their predatory rides. There was a spring of water on the site of the fort but if Alfred had defeated them they were trapped

1. *Proceedings*, Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. xxiii, p. 35.

and even the Parret could not assist their escape after the battle of Cynuit or Cumwich Castle. Besides, King Alfred could check all attempts at disembarking from the castle or fort.

In *Archæologia* (April, 1801) there are further proofs of the "mount's" importance and as a place around which as a meeting-place and junction of lines of communication, armies would fight. There exist indications that the Poldens may have been occupied by the Romans. The late Mr. Ruscombe Poole, of Bridgwater, a keen antiquary, hazarded the conjecture that the Romans may have had a settlement at the Polden Edington from the fact of a discovery there of a tesselated pavement of Roman design together with other relics of coins and clay-moulds. This is an extremely interesting problem in and by itself and the mere fact of Roman occupation here may throw light upon the Polden road itself and the original (possibly) of the Saxon Herepath.[1]

In former days both Gaunt's Hospital and the Abbey of St. Augustine had lands at Paulet and in the Gaunt's Hospital records, preserved amongst the Braikenridge MSS. at the Taunton Museum, there are some useful and significant topographical allusions (1403). First and foremost "Viking's Pill" is frequently mentioned and although this place-name has disappeared to-day it is worth remembering that the term, when used, must have dated back some five hundred years. Here was certainly a post of the Vikings on the Parret, previously unnoticed, but it throws a flood of light upon the Danish campaign, especially if we think of Viking's Pill existing at the same time and in close proximity to Cynwith or Comwich just below. "Gauntsham" is another place-name reproduced on Bowen's map in 1722. In the Paulet Tithe map is the following entry about the Abbey lands of St. Augustine, Bristol:

"Adjoining the Abbey lands are 150 acres or thereabouts which have accumulated and been gained in consequence of the River Parret, which bounds this Parish on the West, having shifted its bed and receded westward."

1. *See* also *Proceedings* Som. Arch. & N.H. Soc., vol. xxii and vol. xxiv., also Aubrey's Mon. Brit. MSS.

It is possible that "Viking's Pill" as a place-name has been lost sight of in this change of current.

In the Gaunt's Hospital records there are also allusions to roads in Paulet. One is called "Via alta et regalis," another "Commune calcetum apud Poulet vocatum calcetum de Comwich," which may have been applied to the Saxon Herepath itself and prove that it was a made road, ancient in 1403, and very different from such a road as led, for instance, to Bridgwater from Cranebridge at the foot of Polden, so often described as in a foundrous and rotten state. As late as 1608 we learn from Somerset Quarter Session Reports that the Causeway between the East Gate of Bridgwater and Cranebridge had fallen into decay.[1] This causeway, therefore, could never have competed with the Comwich Herepath as a western main route. It linked, doubtless, with the old trackway from Bridgwater to Buncombe Hill. The width of the Herepath, sixty feet throughout, gives the clue throughout to its paramount importance as the main artery.

The westward section of the Saxon Herepath is, if possible, more interesting than the eastern, more proofs and place-names attesting to its course along the Brendon ridges and towards Exmoor and Exford where the name itself "Herepath" occurs as a present-day descriptive term. At Cannington and Comwich, the old Manor of Rodway or Radway, already mentioned as an early membrum of the Stoke Courcy Barony, is a sufficient indication of this important "Roadway." The way is still there for all to see, especially on the west side of Cannington Knoll. The camp or old British fortification here is still surrounded by loose stone walling and its physical features are much the same as those assigned by Bishop Asser to "Arx Cynuit." There is no water there and below it is St. Michael's Well at some distance off. The old roadway must have echoed with that conflict between the Danes and the Dumnonian levies on that notable day. The river Parret with its tidal flow seems to have separated the Danish forces, part of which were at Viking's Pill on the Paulet or eastern side of the river. The conflict might have been

1. Somerset Record Society, vol. xxiii, p. 110.

even witnessed but no help could be given and so Odda and his Dumnonian levies triumphed and twelve hundred Danes were slain. (*See* Preface).

Presently, after leaving Cannington Knoll and the " Castle," still found on the modern tithe map, the Herepath passes " Oteley Oak," a notable tree of great dimensions formerly, which may have existed a thousand years ago. Not long ago its hollow bole was so large that it was used as a calf-pen and sometimes the rustic folk in summer time would foregather there and use it as a shelter wherein to devour their " nuncion " or midday meal of cheese and cider. Thence the road went past Swang Gorse, a notable fox cover, and so westwards until it reached Keenthorn. Upon it is built a blacksmith's shop where it is said the forge s'ands in one parish and the blacksmith's dwelling-house in another. In Smallcombe, near Radstock, a cottage built on the cross-way between Bath and Ilchester is freehold, and is said to be the only freehold in the hamlet. Sir R. C. Hoare has also noticed that a cottage built upon the Roman road at Forest Gate was freehold."[1]

From Keenthorne the Herepath gradually ascends the slope towards Over Stowey and the adjoining Quantock ridges. It passes close by Over Stowey Church and a field called " Castle Ground." At this particular point we are able to adduce documentary evidence of its existence dating back to the twelfth century.

In the Gaunt's Hospital records a certain Hugh de Bonvile gives to the Church of Over Stowey a wood and pasture from Stowey Herepath near the old castle " to a Cross at Solmere's head " (*a Staweye harpod juxta vetus Castellarium*). There are at least three distinct references to the Herepath. The old castle was so called to distinguish it from the newer fort at Castle Hill in Nether Stowey, just below, built by the holders of the Stowey Barony about this time (1100–1200), probably the de Candos family. The Church of Over Stowey and the original castle were in very close proximity, as the deeds show in a most minute and particular way. The Herepath ascended the Quantocks and is again alluded to in a separate

1. " Roman Roads," by T. Codrington pp. 263 and 336.

Stoke Courcy document preserved at Eton College in which the same Hugh de Bonvile, presumably, gave to the Church of St. Andrew of Stoke Courci for the sustentation of the monks and in augmentation of former gifts, part of his wood and pasture on Quantock on the west side of the wood he had given to the Church of St. Peter of Over Stowey extending from the bounds which John Chaunol had placed in the said wood between the great road of Solmere on the lower part and the great road called Staw Herepat on the upper part to the head of Ramscombe.[1]

This most precise and exact definition of the Stowey Herepath is of great value not only in determining its direction, which is fairly obvious to-day and corresponding to what is called the Stowey Road on the ridge of Quantock, but also in giving us a hint as to its original and especial character. According to the charter there were two roads both " great " ; the Solmere road running up the combe or valley of " Seven Wells " and " Ramscombe " and used within the memory of man as a thoroughfare, and the Herepath keeping along the ridge, almost parallel with the road below and meeting it at what is known as Crowcombe Gate. This indicates its special military character and the important point is here brought out that this Saxon Herepath is distinct from the publica via of the combe below in so far as it is a parish boundary and therefore of greater age. Its military character is further emphasised by the fact that it originally ran within a stone's throw of the Over-Stowey " vetus castellarium " and also that it passed close to the southern slope of Danesborough or Dousboro Castle, the old fort and encampment guarding the northern flanks of these hills from sea and Severn invasion. A visit to Dousboro Castle would at once prove the strategic importance of this Herepath from the Parret and Cannington Knoll below, the general line of it being traceable.

The Stowey Herepath is linked with Dousboro Castle by a path skirting the top of Bincombe and known as " Great Bear path " which evidently must be a local variation of the " Great Herepath " itself. Beyond are two adjacent rises

1. Hist. MSS. Commission, 9th Report, 1883.

in the Quantock Hills called Great and Little Hereknaps, preserving the "Here" as in Hareclive near Bristol. "Tent Ground" is a place-name close by, so is "Robin Upright," which is more of an etymological puzzle. The ridges of Quantock, however, stand out as a kind of frontier bulwark against sea and Severn invasion. From Dousboro the very *raison d'etre* of the Herepath with its course visible for so many miles over flat and river, as far back as Brent Knoll, can be seen and appreciated almost at a glance. Westward, for thirty miles or more, the final stage of the Herepath, still so named from the Brendons to Cutcombe and Exmoor, the line can be picked up along such a point as the Elworthy Barrows. The Herepath is a parish boundary on the Quantocks and, indeed, along its whole course. At Crowcombe Gate the perambulators of Kilve parish, where an angle of the boundary comes, were always careful to notice that the boundary itself was measured from the bank not the centre of the road as one might suppose. Here as elsewhere the width of sixty feet seems to be strictly observed, a great proof of the oneness and continuity of the Herepath.

The chance that brought the Herepath close to Over Stowey Church deserves some explanation as it raises a question of local history. As may already be imagined the original line of the Herepath, itself the boundary of Christian parishes, was not guided by church consideration at all. The fort rather than the church is the landmark. In the case of Over Stowey the fort probably existed before the church. In the Gaunt's Hospital documents, above alluded to, the site of "Castle Ground," close to St. Peter's well, is called "Crogh Stokke," the "Crogh" meaning hill and "Stokke" referring to a stockaded or palisaded place, the expression meaning a stockaded hill-fort. Probably the site was occupied in very early times by a chieftain or "headman" of the Quantocks who listened to the preaching of a Christian missionary, either Irish or Welsh, and encouraged the building of a primitive church on the site itself. The dedication of the church, *i.e.* SS. Peter and Paul, is a very old one. In the Parret Valley tradition has it that, as a consequence of the proximity of Glaston, both St. Patrick and St. Bridget were well known

either by fame or in person. It is possible that "Crogh Stokke" just helps to lift the curtain from a very remote period. This Manor of Stowey was held at Domesday by Count Harold himself, as a stronghold and as a royal manor. Indeed, Ethelred had given Adscombe in Seven Wells Combe to the Abbey of Athelney, a possession held by the monks up to the date of the dissolution. Such may be some of the little "flores historiarum" we may gather by the way.

To return to the "Herepath" on the Quantocks we find that after keeping to the ridge, known as the Stowey Road, on the south side of Danesboro it comes to Crowcombe Gate and takes rather a sharp turn to the south-east along a wide drove between banks surmounted on either side by beech hedges. Near Crowcombe Gate is the old signalling post known as "Fire beacon hill" and in the vicinity of the gate itself, through which a path and road descends to the west, is a spot of ground called "No man's land," lying, so it is said, in no parish. The space occupied by the Herepath also seems to be extra-parochial, the road forming certainly a boundary on this side and on that, but the space occupied by it being neutral and reserved. This fact may carry its own secret with it, *viz.* that the broad military "Via" was looked upon as a public institution in and by itself, falling under the ancient obligations of the "trinoda necessitas." The castles in remote Saxon times would mean such fortified and palisaded local positions as we have already indicated along the line of the Herepath such as Brent Knoll and Dousboro itself. Norman castles and rectangular forts of masonry came later as the Norman fort of Nether Stowey shows in contrast to the vetus castellarium or Crogh Stokke of Over Stowey.

It must be noted that the Quantock Herepath turns inland from Crowcombe Gate and runs as far as Triscombe and to the slopes of Bagborough or the old Beacon Borough. Just as "Fire Beacon" commanded from Crowcombe hill a wide and extensive view westward so Bagborough hill or "Wills-neck," as it is locally called, commanded a wide view southward over Taunton and over North Petherton and the Valleys of the Tone and Parret. In times of unusual floods up to the present day, as can be inferred from what has been already

stated, the levels round Durston Station and below it present the aspect of an inland lake. The Quantock ridges, broadly speaking, are a protecting arm of high lands, running up to the height of about a thousand feet, interposed between the Severn waters and the Petherton levels. There was certainly a " Portway " between Watchet and the lower Parret leading over Staple Plain and West Quantockshead down to Holford, Stringston and so to Stoke Courcy and the name still survives, as has already been pointed out, but this portway was of no use as a " via maritima " that could be defended. It was too near the sea. After the Norman Conquest, when William of Falaise built a castle at Stoke Courcy the object of this fortress was to guard Stolford and the old " Botestall " or anchorage at the mouth of the Parret, but this was not the scheme of Saxon coastal defence to begin with as contrasted with Norman defence. (*See* Chapter VII).

The Saxon Herepath at Triscombe furnished a boundary between the parishes of Bagborough and Crowcombe and descended the western slope of the Quantocks not far from the " Blue Ball " and Triscombe Stone. This stone itself would appear to mark a comparatively recent ascent, not the old junction. The width of the drove above, another sign of the " Herepath," ceases just here and a subsidiary road or path goes on above Aisholt parish in the direction of Buncombe Hill and Broomfield parish where another little Quantock stronghold, already alluded to and known as Roborough Camp, (called a Castellum in the Hundred Rolls), existed further inland in a somewhat inaccessible and woody corner of the Quantock hills. No doubt this little stronghold entered into the scheme of Saxon defence, as it was attached to the distant capital of Somerton and was part of Saxon Royal demesne. But the road it commanded was of minor importance and always figured as a packway descending from Buncombe Hill to Bridge (Bridgwater) and the Parret.

It is a little significant that according to the terms of an old Bagborough document, defining Quantock boundaries, a portion of the road from Triscombe to Buncombe is called " Alferode " in the fourteenth century. The name is lost now but is it possible that it was so called from King Alfred as it

certainly formed a connecting link between the herepath at Triscombe and the parishes of Broomfield and so to Petherton and Athelney below. As long as King Alfred could hold the Quantock Herepath running from Cynwith or Cymwith Castle on the Lower Parret and so over the ridge of Quantock he had a well-protected base for his Athelney defence. If we could be quite sure about the origin of this "Alferode" we could at once detect and follow some scheme of Athelney defence against the Danes in which the ridges and combes of the Quantocks played an important part. There are numerous traditions of battles and encounters: there is "Dead men," the name of a field in Over Stowey parish, close to Denes Park (Aley Park), where so much blood was spilt that it flowed out of the gate "up to the second shuttle."

After Triscombe the Herepath descends the south-western side of the Quantocks, following pretty closely the boundaries of the Crowcombe and Bagborough and then Lydeard St. Lawrence parishes. Several very ancient place-names still survive here below Triscombe. "Long thorn" is one of them, called "Spina longa" in Ethelwulf's Charter enlarging the boundaries of Taunton Manor: "White Moor," called "Alba gronna" in the same charter is another example. The presumption is that this section of the Herepath, as far as Willet, was used as a line of demarcation by King Ethelwulf in 854, the date of the charter. If we trace this section to-day the Herepath is distinguishable by its width of sixty feet past Red Post to the Railway: thence to the right, along "Binford's Lane." At the west end of Binford's Lane the track is lost or rather reduced to the dimensions of a narrowed pathway, with hedges on either side, for a field or two till it emerges at "Dean's Lane" and is continued along it to Coleford water, descending from Willet to Stogumber parish. Thence past Cutborough Copse to Cat's Castle and so to Elworthy Barrows across the Wiveliscombe *via* Monksilver road. Just here it is possible that another military road from Exeter, Wellington, Badialton, Wiveliscombe can be detected. Stogumber was an important Royal Saxon possession at Domesday and here Collinson notes Roman coins have been found. "Turk's Castle" in Bicknoller may have been reckoned as a Stogumber fort.

There are two good places at least where to view this Herepath, after it leaves Triscombe and goes westward, one at "Red Post" where it cuts across the present Taunton road and serves as a boundary between Crowcombe and Lydeard St. Lawrence: another where it ascends the Brendon Hills at Elworthy Barrows, a fine signal station in ancient days and mentioned as an observation point and rallying place in case of French invasion *temp.* Henry VIII.[1] At Red Post the most obvious characteristic that meets the eye is its width of sixty feet, with the signalling station of Bagborough hill above, and, if we follow the road on we shall find that it is an unfailing feature except where it has been encroached upon by parallel wayside banks and inclosures for gardens, etc. Elworthy Barrows is a remarkable feature as the Brendon stronghold and Elworthy itself looks like a Saxon compound meaning the old "worth." St. David's Well, just here, points to a very old dedication and with Willet itself it would not be irrelevant to associate the "Waelas" or Welsh folk. Freeman himself supposes that there was a fight on the Quantocks and at Wills neck (Waelas Nek) whereby the invading Saxons forced the Lidyard or gate of the valley lying between the Quantocks and Brendon and going down to Williton (Waelas Ton) and Watchet. This seems extremely probable and Grab barrows near Williton may be the site of a Saxon-British fight not necessarily Saxon-Danish.

The old military terrain is best illustrated and explained by this Herepath that linked Quantock and Brendon defence against an enemy. More plainly here than elsewhere its function as a coast defence road appears and it was laid out originally with this object. The signalling stations give the line. In case of a rally and of "impeaching an enemy's landing" the levies both horse and foot would be rushed along the broad Herepath wherever they were wanted. Pack-lanes were out of the question as furnishing a marching route, although pack-lanes might be feeders, as, indeed, many of them were. To this day they can be traced in large numbers, although many of them are now simply deep and picturesque

1. Trevelyan MSS. at Nettlecombe Court.

old lanes, not unlike mere ditches covered on either side with ferns and wild flowers. The Herepath as an arterial road always kept to the hard ridges if possible. It was so on the Stowey road and it is so on the Brendon Hills, also on the ridge running from Bushel Bridge, Oldre Farm towards Exford.

On Brendon the Herepath passes close to Raleigh's Cross, serving here as a parish boundary. The view seaward from Raleigh's Cross shows the little harbour of Watchet below (so often visited by the Danes and occupied by them as "Danes Castle" to the west of it seems to indicate) together with the windings of the Severn Sea far up to the east. The value of the Herepath on the inland height is apparent. The Danes or any other enemy from the sea might land at Watchet but, inland, they could not make much progress. Swift mobilisation along the Herepath, which was too far from the channel to be cut easily, would meet their forays. The alarm would spread from beacon to beacon, from Brent Knoll to Dunkery, from the Poldens to Exmoor. As the Herepath ran in a circum-circular fashion from the Quantock to the Exmoor country it would facilitate a flank attack from east or west and place the invading force at a disadvantage. It is possible that the Danes, for instance, reached the Brendons near Raleigh's Cross, as there are place-names, such as Danesknap (already noted) above Nettlecombe, appear to testify, but they never got far inland. Taunton seems always to have been free from their ravages and it is possible that this immunity was secured by the Great Stowey Herepath. Nor, if they never penetrated far behind Watchet, did they go far on Exmoor and Dunkery behind Porlock, owing to the same protection.

The last section of the Herepath, following its line westward towards Exmoor, is interesting to us not only because it carries out the original conception of a coast-defence military route from Bristowa keeping along the ridges, wherever possible, and linking forts and earthworks together, but because here, as the country grows wilder and less closely cultivated, it reverts to its original character and dimensions for considerable distances. Indeed, as already noted, the name Herepath, as a parish boundary, continues to the present day and on Brendon itself there is a "Hareclive" which

reminds us of the Hundred of that name close to Bristowa where it started. Perhaps the best place to view this part of the Herepath is at Bushel Bridge, on the borders of Cutcombe parish. To-day it is a most picturesque lane arched over with hazel trees inviting a contemplative stroll on a summer's day. What memories it must surely invoke of past ages! What pictures of warlike hosts faring backwards and forwards as a coast alarm spread, say, from Minehead Beacon or Cleeve Hill up to Brendon and the Quantocks. Or tall Brent Knoll far to the east may have given the first hint of a pirates' rush from the Severn creeks and pills.

One terminus or, perhaps, starting point, if we may so regard it, of this Bristol-Cutcombe Herepath seems to have been some rallying point in or near the old Forest of Exmoor, always a fastness of Ancient Dumnonia. Such a rallying point may have been at Almandeswyrth or Alderman's Worth, the dwelling of the alderman of those parts, (corrupted now into Almsworthy), on the present Willshead Farm, a very ancient tenement in Exford parish. Alderman's Barrow is close by. In the 1279 Perambulation of Exmoor we meet with Osmundesbergh-wey which seems to give us the old name of a possible alderman, called Osmund, as well as the mention of the "way" or herepath. About the same date the Vicar of Winsford was given crofts that lay "on the south side between the king's highway leading from Winsford-Bosun to Exford." There is also the suggestive name of Stowey, *i.e.* "Stow way" hereabouts, which reminds us of the Stowey Herepath on the Quantocks and old Stowey on the Brendon Hills—a threefold attestation of a suggestive place-name recurring along the line of the old Herepath. "Ashway" in this neighbourhood may also refer to it. Alderman's Worth lies just outside the limit of the old forest, before its enlargement in King John's reign. Exmoor itself is, of course, a recently formed parish.

Historically, this old Herepath must evoke many memories. The industrious "florilegist" may gather many "flores historiae" from the moors that fringe the base of the classic Brent Knoll to the wort covered slopes and leafy lanes of Exmoor. It may even be a romantic thread in itself binding the chequered annals of "Ancient Dumnonia" together. It

is a link between Bristowa and the west. It was flanked by many an early fortress and it passed by many a beacon hill where war's alarms might be signalled, as at Danesborough and Cothelstone on the Quantocks, Elworthy on the Brendons and the heights that overlooked Watchet and Cleeve Hill. The old road of former days may, indeed, throw into relief the links that bound Watchet and the West Somerset harbours with old Bristowa. Could it throw light upon the Chatterton mystery and the origin of "Aella a Tragical Enterlude." What indeed could have induced Chatterton in this poem to make the great Danish fight take place at Watchet? How could the boy Chatterton, untravelled as he was, invent a Danish fight at Watchet? Did he know of this Saxon Herepath westward across the Parret to the Quantocks? We leave this mystery for others to solve if they can and we betake ourselves to the bowers and leafy banks of the Saxon Herepath, for this is a reality that speaks eloquently from the past and was never locked away in a Parish Chest.

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Gwent, Gwentonia Civitas, a petty Kingdom *temp.* King Alfred and Asser, included in "Demetica Regio" of Asser's narrative, not to be confused with "Wentana Civitas," *i.e.* Winchester. *See* old map in Warrington's History of Wales.
Gwledig, Welsh, Ruler or Prince, Dux Britanniae, probably held by Maximus (Rhys), also by Ambrosius Aurelianus, 6.
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Hareknap, near Herepod. A "Herepod" occurs near Glaston, probably in connection with the Polden ridge road; also in the parish of Wellington, indicating possibly a military road from Wellington to the Brendon hills from Exeter, joining the Quantock "herepath" near Elworthy Barrows. At Wellington there is still a place-name "Wrangway."
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Herepath, the path of the "Here" or Saxon host; sometimes "theoherpodford," as in King Edward the Elder's gift of Wellington and West Buckland to Bishop Asser, marking the boundaries and therefore pre-existent. (*See* Report of Wells MSS., 1885, p. 197) a Saxon "via militaris," possibly on the line of a subsidiary Roman road, sometimes, and generally a parochial boundary. Upon the Quantock ridge such a road was called the "Great Staw or Stowey Herepath," as apart from other roads, and the word "Stowey" may really be derived from "Staw" and "way" (via ?). Just here the place-name "Great Bear Path," under "Dousboro' Castle" survives, evidently a corruption of the old "Great Staw Herepath" of the twelfth century Charters, 18, 110, 116.
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Horsey, *i.e.* "horse eyot" or island close to Downend on Poldens, probably the "Ila" of Domesday, formed by the Parret, *i.e.* the "terra inter duas aquas" of Walter de Douai, and covering the Parret loop (p. 181) of 150 acres. Horsey gave a name to a family originally called "de Horsey."
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